NO FICTION

# NO FICTION:

## Narrative,

FOUNDED ON

RECENT AND INTERESTING

FACTS.

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'Le vrai n'est pas toujours vraisemblable.'

'These familiar histories may, perhaps, be made of greater use than the solemnities of professed morality, and convey the knowledge of vice and virtue with more efficacy than axioms and definitions.' Dr. Johnson.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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1819.

TO

# YOUTH,

AS THE BLOOM OF THIS AGE,

AND THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE ESPECIALLY

Dedicated;

BY ONE WHO

SYMPATHIZES IN THEIR JOYS,

HAS CONTENDED WITH THEIR DANGERS,

AND AFFECTIONATELY DESIRES

THEIR WELFARE.

# PREFACE.

'LET no one say — I will write a duodecimo.' When the rude sketch of the following work lay beneath the eye, nothing more was proposed than to prepare a few short chapters, for a monthly miscellany. Yet, in embodying it, with a uniform endeavour to be concise, it has spread itself into two volumes. That it might, indeed, have been kept within smaller limits, is readily acknowledged; but this restriction, it is conceived, would, in

a great measure, have called for the relinquishment of the original design. The design, in making these pages public, was not to agitate the heart, but to amend it; and to realize this it was necessary, not merely to throw together some striking events, but especially to develop the moral causes and effects, with which they were associated.

The work is what it professes to be, *a narrative founded on facts*. It is allowed that some liberties have been taken, but it is possible they are less frequent and more trivial, than the reader will be disposed to imagine. Should this, however, be the case, it is without remedy; for to say in what they consist, would render them altogether unserviceable, as they are *only* adopted to veil the parties concerned from the eye of an unprofitable curiosity. Be

it sufficient then to state, that wherever they exist, they are not of an *exaggerating* character. The truth is often lowered rather than heightened; and, in two instances particularly, a remarkable circumstance has been totally omitted, because, though of actual occurrence, it appeared beyond the range of probability.

The history opens in the nineteenth year of Lefevre; and embraces a course of events, running through the twelve succeeding years of his life. It is, therefore, in its own nature, eminently adapted to those, who are occupying or anticipating a similar period of existence; and the writer has constantly *held* in view the improvement of the youthful character, in the choice and illustration of the incidents he has introduced. If, on the whole, the book shall be thought a suitable instrument—of

imparting a relish for the beauties of nature, —of leading the mind to discriminate between passion and principle—the specious and the good,—and of impressing the heart more deeply with the importance, sublimity and blessedness of genuine piety —he will be satisfied—more than satisfied! Though the seed may have been sown with many tears, doubtless, in reaping such fruits, he shall greatly rejoice!

The writer is, in some degree, aware of the numerous disadvantages which crowd on an *anonymous* publication, and threaten to hurry it into oblivion; but to these, in the present instance, he cheerfully submits—not to shrink from any supposed responsibility—but to preserve entire that veil of concealment, which he has judged it right to throw over the face of the whole narration. His little work, then, is cast,

like a foundling, on the world—without name—without protection. Yet he rests on the assurance, that it is committed to those—who can judge fairly of a book, that has not the patronage of a name—who consider rather *what* is said, than *who* says it—who scorn to censure the more eagerly, because it can be done with comparative impunity—and who are disposed to welcome with the smile of affinity, the most unprotected and unpretending offspring of Benevolence.




# NO FICTION.

## A NARRATIVE FOUNDED ON FACTS.

### CHAPTER I.

'HOW sweet a morning it is!' said Mr. Douglas.

'It is indeed!' replied his friend and companion Mr. Banks.

'To use the words of a poet,' continued Mr. Douglas, 'all nature is beauty to the eye and music to the ear;' and, taking some liberty with him, we may add, fragrance to the smell,' inclining his hand, as he spoke, to the banks and hedges skirting either side of the road in which they were walking.

'And,' observed Mr. Banks, 'all the fragrance, the music, and the beauty of nature appear in separate ways to be uttering the praises of the great Creator. It

is at this moment I feel the force of the Psalmist's words—*All thy works praise Thee!*'

'And I hope,' rejoined Mr. Douglas, turning on his friend a countenance lighted up with pleasure, 'we may subjoin—*and thy saints bless Thee!*'

Mr. Banks caught the allusion. Their hearts were moved; and a few moments were given to silence.

'At least,' said Mr. Banks, resuming the conversation, 'none can have greater cause to *bless* than we, who have so lately witnessed his mercy. Not long since we were strangers to God, and strangers to hope; we were living according to the course of this world; children of disobedience and wrath; but, we are washed; we are sanctified; we are justified!'

'O what a state were we in!' exclaimed Mr. Douglas, thoughtfully, 'and what should we not feel *if* we are delivered from it!—And,' continued he, endeavouring to rise into confidence, 'when we consider, that he who delivered us is the Being, who clothes the fields with beauty,

upholds the world by his power, and spreads out the heaven like a curtain: that this Being, great and happy in himself, pitied us; dwelt in flesh for us; suffered poverty and reproach for us; groaned, and wept, and died for us——'

Their feelings rose above utterance, and once more they resigned themselves to silent and divine reflections.

'No thanks they breathed, they proffer'd no request,
Wrapt into still communion, that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
Their minds were a thanksgiving to the power
That sav'd them,—all was blessedness and love.'

On these sentiments of blessedness and love which possessed the young friends, the morning they admired was well adapted to have its influence. It was one of those mornings with which the month of May sometimes presents us. The sun was rising with splendor into the heavens, and seemed rejoicing, as a strong man, in chasing away the gloom of night and subduing the severities of winter. The hills and meadows were covered with a beautiful robe

of living green, richly enamelled with the golden and pearly hues of the buttercup and daisy. The little lambs were dancing in the surrounding fields as the emblems of peace, and innocence, and freedom. The lark was bearing her song of praise towards the gate of heaven; while a thousand birds, of meaner name, seemed to be sustaining the chorus amongst the trees and bushes below. The primrose, the cowslip and the hawthorn, were throwing back their dewy leaves to the sun, and appeared collected by the way side to pour forth, from their cups, the sweetest perfumes to regale the passing traveller.

Mr. Banks and Douglas too, were just at that period of life which is usually the spring tide of animal spirits; their tastes had not been corrupted by the habits nor subdued by the perplexities of the world. They had recently 'tasted that the Lord is gracious,' and had the freshness of his love upon them; they had dedicated themselves to their Redeemer, and thought they could not better express their gratitude to Him for his benefits than by making his

goodness known to others. With this conception they had engaged themselves in instructing some poor children a few miles from London, and they were at this time on their way thither.

It will be allowed, that it is not easy to conceive of circumstances more favorable to happiness. Indeed they were the subjects of all those delicious sentiments which flow from youth, from friendship, from nature, from piety. They travelled forward unconscious of time or distance. They were alternately talkative and silent: they talked to express happy feelings, and were silent because they found them inexpressible.

The still communion in which we left the youthful companions was not long indulged before they came in sight of a person, who was walking slower than themselves, in the same direction, and apparently reading as he went. As they made ground on him, Mr. Banks said, 'I think it is Mr. Lefevre, a teacher of a neighbouring school. I hope it is; he is an excellent young man, and I shall have pleasure in

introducing you to each other.' They were not long held in a state of doubt as to the person, and, by quickening their pace a little, they soon came up to him.

Mr. Lefevre appeared just to have reached the years of discretion, fresh with youth and full of vigor. He was tall, well proportioned, and of good presence. There was something commanding and lofty in his manner, with a general expression of frankness and energy in his countenance. He exchanged civilities with our young friends with unaffected kindness, and they proceeded on their way in company.

After a slight pause, Mr. Banks said, 'we have very much enjoyed this charming morning.'

'I am happy to hear it,' replied Mr. Lefevre, 'it is quite a *Sabbath Morning*.'

'It is,' rejoined Mr. Douglas, catching the reference of his new acquaintance; 'creation seems to say 'Rest from earthly care;' and the lark over our heads,' raising his hand towards the sky, 'is inviting us to the threshold of the heavenly world in acts of cheerful devotion.'

'Yes,' said Lefevre, 'if at any time nature is to be regarded as a transparent lens, through which we may look up to 'nature's God,' it must be on such a morning as this.'

'And', resumed Mr. Douglas, 'if our sluggish thoughts require assistance in rising from sensible objects, to the Great Father of all, I think they may derive it invariably from the author you hold in your hand,' casting his eyes down upon the book.

'Cowper!' said Mr. Lefevre, with a stronger smile on his face than usual, unconsciously opening and shutting the volume, 'your remark is excellent; he is my favorite; who, may I ask—who is yours?'

'Were I to speak proudly and in the fashion,' replied Mr. Douglas, 'I should say Milton. Every body praises Milton, read or unread. But if I reply seriously and as becomes me, I shall confess that I know too little of the Poets to say any one is my favorite. Many of them I have not read, and many of them I am willing

to believe, I am not prepared to appreciate. In this latter class, I acknowledge I must place Milton himself. When I sat down to read him, and found I could not relish every incident and every line of a poem allowed to be incomparable in its way, I felt similar disappointment to that Sir Joshua Reynolds ascribes to himself, when on commencing the study of Raphael's paintings, he found he had no taste for the sublime productions of his pencil. However, as he survived his vexations, I hope the time will come, when I shall be taught to estimate Milton as he deserves. As to Cowper,' continued he, looking modestly, as if to apologize for holding the conversation, 'he is more familiar to me than any one of the Poets. Whether you sit by the fireside, or stroll in the fields, he seems always ready to attend, and divert, and edify you. One feels interested in him as a man and a christian; and as a poet, every body admires him. At least, his powerful descriptions, his love of nature, his virtuous and pungent satire, his comprehensive benevolence, his fervid and sublime

piety, his deep pathos, and even his plaintive melancholy, have often found their way to *my* heart.'

This notice of the characteristic excellencies of Cowper, was naturally succeeded by a reference to their favorite passages. The smile of delight passed like a sun-beam over their features, on finding so strong a similarity in their tastes. The intimacy they had with the poet was insensibly transferred to themselves; and each one felt he had found a friend in a period of time not usually sufficient to form an acquaintance.

This unexpected interview beguiled the way, and soon the happy party arrived at the point of separation. Mr. Lefevre and Douglas parted to their several duties with sensible regret, but with an understanding, that they were to take the walk as frequently as they could in each other's society.

## CHAPTER II.

WE cannot rationally separate the doctrine of a general from that of a particular Providence. The existence of chance is incompatible with the existence of Divine Government. The scheme of Providence must embrace every thing or nothing: for the grandest and most complex movements of Providence are often resting on springs the most minute and insignificant. Every person who studies the workings of his mind, and marks the events of his life, has observed the most material occurrences in his history to arise, at one time, from the most trifling circumstances, over which he had no control, and at another, from some slight decisions, which might have been otherwise influenced by the weight of a feather. All the blessed consequences of the reformation in this country are derived to us, from an impulse of irregular passion in the bosom of Henry VIII. And, if so

humble an instance may be adduced, the accidental meeting and slight intercourse of our two young friends Lefevre and Douglas, gave birth to a friendship which contributed, in a considerable degree, to the formation of their characters, their connections, and their prospects.

It must be allowed that there were in Lefevre and Douglas some of the best materials for friendship. There were those points of resemblance and contrast, which the best judges deem essential to the strongest intimacies. They were both generous, susceptible, fond of nature, and warm in the pursuit of knowledge. But there were some very distinct lines of difference. We will not, however, for the sake of giving effect to a sketch of their characters, anticipate our subject, and destroy the active conceptions of the reader; they shall speak for themselves as the narrative proceeds to its consummation.

One morning, some months after their first meeting, as they were finishing their usual walk, with more than their usual satisfaction in each other, Lefevre proposed

that they should arrange to return together in the evening.

'If you are willing to remain so late as we do, I shall be most happy to have your company,' said Douglas.

'When your society is the object,' replied Lefevre, 'time is no sacrifice. I will excuse myself to my companions, and be with you to tea. Farewell!'

'Farewell!' said Douglas, as they parted. 'May our labours be successful!'

In the evening, punctual to his appointment, Lefevre arrived, and took his place at the tea-table.

'I have been sorry to find,' said Douglas, 'that one of my most hopeful scholars is ill, and not likely to live. I must call to see him on my way home, and I am afraid it will make you later than you wish.'

'O, don't name it,' returned Lefevre; 'I shall feel a pleasure in calling with you.'

They hastened with their refreshments, and were soon on their way to the cottage. On arriving at it, Douglas opened the door, and entered the room with which

it was connected. Here he found only a child sitting, who informed him that his parents were attending in the sick room above. The air of desertion in the lower part of the dwelling, and the stillness that prevailed throughout, excited the tears of the visitants; and they ascended with gentle tread to the upper part of the habitation. The door was on jar, as for the sake of ventilation. Not a sound, however, was to be heard, except that created by themselves. Douglas tapped at the door. It rolled gently backward, as if self-moved, and nothing met their ear but a deep sigh from behind it. Before Douglas had well entered the apartment, the afflicted child caught a glance of him, and, with a smile of joy, exclaimed, 'It is my teacher!'

'Yes, it is I, my dear,' said Douglas, pressing his feverish little hand.

The father stood at the foot of the bedstead, looking on his child with a countenance that said, 'Would that I could save thee, child.' The mother sat between the head of the bedstead and the

door, evidently recovering herself from a fit of tears. A fine boy, about five years old, stood by her side, resting his arm on her knee, and looking alternately on his mother and brother, with an air of mysterious concern. Thomas, the sufferer, lay on the side of the bed nearest his mother, in a state of affliction that afforded little hope of his recovery. But, although reduced in body, he seemed to possess a quickness of mind and a freedom of utterance unusual to him in health. This was truly pleasing to Douglas. He had lately been very much gratified with this child's attention and seriousness; and he now came with similar, but superior anxieties to the husbandman, who, after a severe night in spring, walks forth to see whether his young fruit has survived or fallen by the blast!

'O, sir,' said the mother, with a crying voice, 'Thomas has been breaking our hearts! He says he has been such a naughty boy—has such a bad heart—and fears he shall never go to heaven!—and, God bless him! there's not a child a mile round so good or so dutiful.'

'And do you, my dear,' said Douglas, 'really feel that you have so bad and wicked a heart?'

'I do, indeed!—I have not thought about it for a long time. I remember when you talked to us about the heart of stone and the heart of flesh; and shewed how we all had stony and hard hearts; and told us we should all pray to God to take them away. I felt it was all true. And when I came home, I remember coming up here, and kneeling down there, (pointing to the corner of the room), and praying to God to take my stony heart away.' And I remember I said to myself, "I *will* think about God and heaven; I will read my bible and say my prayers; and I *won't* care so much about my play." But I didn't do it long! O, Teacher, I have been very wicked! Do you think God will forgive me?'

'My dear child,' said Douglas, much moved by these simple sentences, 'you should be thankful to God for shewing you your sins, and teaching you to be sorry for them; and by no means think that he

will not forgive you. There is your father: do you think if you had done something wrong to him, and had shewn him you were very sorry for it, he would not forgive you?'

'O, indeed he would! He has often done so!' interrupted Thomas, with great affection.

'Well, then, you know I have often told you God is your *Heavenly* Father. He is more good—more kind—more forgiving than *this* father; therefore you should trust in Him to forgive you, as you do in your *earthly* father.'

'I remember when you spoke to us about the poor prodigal,' continued the child, 'you said every poor, thoughtless, wicked, prodigal boy, who returned to his Father, would be received; and that his arms were always open to receive him.'

'Yes; and God is not only willing to receive us, but he sent his dear Son Jesus Christ to bring us to him. And Jesus, you know, to encourage children like you, has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."'

Thomas was a little exhausted; he turned himself on his back—sighed, and said in a faint voice,

'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child!'

After a short pause, Douglas continued. 'Do you, my dear, feel willing to die, if God should please?'

'I think so,' said he, with a slow utterance, as if thinking. 'But I don't know what dying is. I should not like to leave my mother—and my father—and George—and you behind!'

This natural expression of an affectionate heart, touched them all; and little George, by the mention of his name, seemed just prepared to burst into cries.

'But you know, my dear, that all good children, at their death, go to heaven.'

'Yes,' replied he: 'and I should like to go to heaven—to serve God—to be holy and happy—and to live with angels and saints; but I should like *you all to be there.* You will all be there, won't you?' (look-

ing anxiously upon them, as he put the question).

This was too much for their feelings. Douglas replied, 'I hope so, my dear! It will be a sad thing if *any one* of us is shut out! Let us pray that we may *all* meet with you in heaven at last.'

They kneeled around the bed. Douglas offered a short prayer, with as much composure as his own feelings, and the sighs of the father, and sobs of the mother, would allow. He blessed God for such evidence of a work of grace on the heart of the afflicted child; resigned his body and spirit into his hands, as his Redeemer; and earnestly and particularly implored, that *each* person present might receive his salvation, and enter into his heavenly kingdom.

After other conversations of the most pleasing kind, the visitors took a solemn and affectionate leave of the child, expecting they might not meet again till the morning of the resurrection. Lefevre, as they were departing from the room, stroked George on the head, saying, 'You are a

good boy; you are sorry for your brother Thomas, a'n't you?' This appeal overpowered little George. His feelings had been wound up by what he had witnessed, and he could hold them no longer. 'But he shan't die—he shan't die!' he exclaimed; and running his face into the folds of his mother's gown, continued sobbing aloud for some time.

Meanwhile our young friends had started for the metropolis. Deeply affected with the scene they had realized, they locked arm to arm, and passed on their way in silence. The sun had once more run his race, and no vestige of his glory was left on the face of nature, except a few streaks of golden light resting on the western hills. The harvest moon was rising in yellow brightness into the heavens; while the stars filled the whole firmament, glittering with a brilliancy proportioned to their distance from her unwonted splendour. The fields they were traversing, were filled either with sheaves prepared for the garner, or with ripened corn, gently yielding to the occasional breeze that

passed over it. A little murmuring stream by turns appeared and disappeared on the verge of their path, reflecting in fluctuating light the heavenly luminaries. A light-brown mist slept on the bosom of the earth, and gave a soft and chastened aspect to every visible object. In short, it was one of our finest autumnal evenings; an evening highly congenial to that pleasing melancholy and calm joy of which they were already possessed, and which they were anxious to prolong.

They indulged in their happy musings till they had passed over the fields and entered on the public road, when the rumbling of a stage coach, as it passed along, seemed to break the charm of silence; and Lefevre, turning to his friend, said, 'What an interesting scene we have witnessed!'

'We have indeed!' answered Douglas, pausing a moment, from the strength of his feelings. 'I have often been delighted in reading the accounts of the power of religion, on the minds of children; but this is the *first* instance which has fallen

beneath my own eye.' What a religion is our's! How great!—and yet how plain! It is so sublime, that it rises beyond the comprehension of the most enlarged mind; and so simple, that it brings home its lessons to the bosom of a little child! The elements of the gospel, like the elements of our nourishment, are adapted to the endless varieties of age, and character, and circumstance, throughout all the human race.'

'And this appears,' said Lefevre, 'to be a feature in our religion which distinguishes it from all false religions. As far as I am acquainted with the subject, no one of the Pagan systems *could* have been rendered universal. They all received their character from national prejudice, national policy, and predominant national vices.'

'Yes,' rejoined Douglas; 'and as, in their own nature, they were not adapted for the benefit of mankind as such, so their great teachers discovered an indifference to the bulk of the human race, incompatible with every thing which deserves the name either of religion or mo-

rality. With haughty pride, they exulted in their own supposed wisdom; and looked down with scorn or ridicule on the folly of those, who were not initiated into their false philosophy. Man scarcely deserved their notice, but as he claimed the proud titles of rich, or wise, or noble; and women and children were utterly abandoned to ignorance and wretchedness. Jesus, our blessed Saviour, was the first Master in religion, who opened the door of knowledge to *all*—who carried his instructions and his tears to the cottage of the *poor!* This appears to me to involve a powerful evidence of the truth of Christianity, that may well perplex and confound the hosts of infidelity. I have more than once thought that the Psalmist must have referred to this "use" of the subject, when he said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine *enemies;* that thou mightest *still the enemy and the avenger.*" I am sure my friend will forgive me in saying so much and so earnestly; it has filled my thoughts since we left the cottage; and I

must be allowed a little extra feeling in favour of the afflicted child.'

'I should be surprised,' said Lefevre, 'if *you* did not feel deeply on such an occasion. It has powerfully affected *me*; and how must *you* be affected, when you have reason to think that you were employed, as the instrument in producing so happy a change on the child. Don't you remember the line of Beattie—

"If I *one* soul have saved, I have not lived in vain?"

'I do—I do remember it!' said Douglas; 'and I feel the force of the sentiment. The very supposition of being greeted, at a future day, by this dear child, as the instrument of its salvation, is almost too exhilirating. O, next to our own salvation, there is nothing so important, so interesting, as the salvation of others! We will pursue knowledge; we will admire nature; we will discharge the common duties of life; but let us henceforth resolve, principally to pursue—the salvation of those who are ready to perish!'

## CHAPTER III.

LEFEVRE, from the first, had formed a favorable idea of Douglas. This sentiment had become strong and permanent in their subsequent intercourse; and, as he had great transparency in his character, it did not fail to discover itself in a decided manner. There was something too in his circumstances which cherished this attachment. He had not long possessed any relish for a religious friend; and, since he had entertained the desire, he had not met with one to whom he could freely unbosom himself. He found he was the subject of new and uncertain fears, hopes, and convictions; and he panted like 'the hart for the water brook,' for a friend to whom he might entrust the perplexities of his experience, and the secrets of his soul. It will not, therefore, be deemed strange, if, at this time, the expressions of his attachment were eager and somewhat exclusive.

Douglas was by no means insensible to the overtures of Lefevre. He had been pleased to mark some of the excellencies of his character, and he loved him with sincerity and ardor. And yet, it is certain, that there was something more temperate in the expression of his feelings. This, perhaps, might be referred, partly, to a more deliberative turn of mind, which required to know the ground it was to occupy, before it occupied it; partly, to the wreck of a former friendship which was present to his thoughts; and principally, to a fear, lest his friend, in the ardor of his affection, might give him credit for excellencies which he did not possess, and eventually reap disappointment.

Scenes of suffering are often the birthplace or cradle of friendship. It has been found that persons previously indifferent, not to say hostile, to each other, have at the sick or death bed of a common friend, formed a mutual affection. Their sympathies were warmed and melted; they insensibly flowed into each other, and settled in an abiding friendship. Thus it is that

the kind hand of Providence whilst it is in the act of removing one friend from our embraces, is often preparing for us the bosom of another.—The incident briefly introduced in the last chapter, was not without its effect on the hearts of our young friends. It had developed those sympathies of nature, which are so eminently attractive to the youthful mind. Their cheek had been wetted by the tear of pity, and brightened by the smile of gratitude, at the same time, and by the same cause; and it seemed to give them a greater oneness of existence, than they had derived from all their former intercourse.

About this time, as though it were designed, that their friendship should attain all the strength of which it was capable, Douglas was seized with an inflammation of the lungs, which, for some days, threatened his existence; and, for a considerable time, rendered his return to perfect health a matter of uncertainty. This was an occasion which elicited the finest parts of Lefevre's generous character; an occasion which he himself would pro-

bably have desired, could the desire have been separated from the sufferings or exposure of his friend. He flew to his bedside; he watched over him with a brother's anxiety; when every thing was done for his safety and comfort, he seemed still to be asking his thoughts whether something more might not be accomplished; and, so truly was he affected by the varying symptoms of the disease, that his countenance appeared a faithful index of its declension or progress. When the alarming characters of the complaint subsided, and Douglas was evidently recovering, he devoted all the hours he could secure to his amusement; and paid him a thousand little attentions, which friendship only can suggest, and, which, though highly gratifying to receive, can never be solicited. And as the season opened (for this affliction confined him during the winter months to his dwelling) Lefevre cheerfully gave him the assistance which weakness made necessary, in seeking the healing influence of the open air.

It was on a morning, though early in

the year, peculiarly favorable, that they took their first walk in search of refreshment and health. Douglas supported on the arm of his friend, had walked a considerable distance, when he observed the trunk of a tree, lying on the sunny side of a park paling, and partly overshadowed by a lilach just venturing to put forth its blossoms. The temptation was too powerful to be resisted, and they were presently seated. The whole vegetable and animal world seemed to exult in the departure of winter, and to hail the approaches of spring. Nothing could better harmonize with the feelings of Douglas and Lefevre. To the former it was particularly interesting, from his having been so long the subject of sickness and confinement. He now saw all nature as it were starting from the tomb. He felt the genial heat warming his frame; and he inhaled the soft westerly breeze, which exhilarated his spirits like a cordial.

After they had enjoyed their separate reflections for a few minutes, Douglas, turning to his friend, placing his hand on

his knee, and looking in his face with that tender composure so often left on the countenance by recent suffering, said, with affectionate emphasis, 'My dear Charles, let us give thanks to God! He has at once, by my indisposition, strengthened the ties of our attachment, and taught us that, in their firmest state, they can be burst asunder by the touch of his finger. May we ever hold our friendship in subordination to his will!—may we ever dedicate its choicest fruits to his glory!'

Lefevre found it easier to notice this address by his looks than his tongue. He was endeavouring to suppress the tear which was gathering in his eye. Douglas instantly perceived this; and, doing violence to his own emotions, he resolved to direct the attention of his friend to a subject more capable of conversation.

Assuming a cheerfulness of manner and of countenance, he said, 'I have been thinking, Charles, that, considering the intimacy which has subsisted between us for some length of time, it is wonderful how little I know of your history; especially

of those events which have issued in directing you to serious pursuits. I wish you would gratify me by referring to some of the particulars. You may be sure I shall feel deeply interested in them; and the present moment seems highly favourable, as my weakness prevents me from sustaining my usual part in the conversation.'

It was, indeed, somewhat remarkable that, during an intercourse of so many months, Douglas knew so little of his friend's personal history and religious experience. The truth is, Lefevre could not endure any thing approaching to egotism; and, as it often happens to persons of ardent feeling, he freqently confounded, in his opposition to this fulsome foible, those modest references to the most interesting circumstances of one's own life, which occasion sometimes warrants, and even solicits. From his friend, however, he could withhold nothing, and he replied to his request by the following statement.

'I had thought the hints and allusions which have occasionally dropped in the

course of our friendship, embraced most concerning myself that is worth your knowledge; but, if it can yield you any gratification, I shall find pleasure in being more particular.

'Of my residence and relations I need say nothing; and the events of my boyish life would scarcely have any thing to distinguish them from those of most boys, at the same period of existence. Perhaps the first occurrence that is worth mentioning, is my departure from the maternal roof. I retain, and shall ever retain, a lively impression of the feelings of that day. I seem to hear the stage coach rattling up the paved street; I seem to feel my mother's kisses—first impressed in the parlour—then renewed in the passage—and finally repeated on the steps at the door. I fancy I see her standing on the spot where we last embraced; the tears running down her cheek, as she said, "My dear Charles, beware of the snares of London!"—and then, as we separated, clasping her hands, and looking toward the heavens, regardless of spectators, earnestly exclaim, "God Almighty keep my child!"

'I need not say that, in this separation, the tears that were shed were not all on my mother's side. My distress, however, was but of short duration. Every minute as we travelled, was presenting new objects; my spirits soon recovered their tone, and left me at liberty to find amusement in them.

'As we drew near the metropolis, I forgot my separation from home. My bosom swelled with hope and joy. I was constantly looking out for some glimpse of a place of which I had I know not what conceptions. I believe,' said he, smiling, 'that my ideas were not much more just than those of the famed ignoramus, who expected to find Europe in a map of England. Certainly I almost expected to find the world in London. But my undefined and indefinable notions were soon dissipated; and, when I found myself in a strange house, and surrounded by strange faces, I could not help sighing for my accustomed seat at my mother's fireside, and the well-known countenances of my young companions. However, the

persons to whom I came were acquainted with our family, and their attentions soon reconciled me to the change.

'My first concern was to see something of the place so exalted in my imagination. Accordingly, I spent three days in walking from street to street, and square to square, and gazing earnestly at every thing I saw. At length, I was perfectly exhausted; and my curiosity settled into something like disappointment. I admired, indeed, the greatness, the extent, and riches of the place; but there was not that pomp and show I expected; palaces and mansions were neither so numerous nor grand, as I had conceived; the noise and bustle which at first pleased and surprised me, at last became irksome; and, in addition to this, as a country boy, I was incapable of appreciating what is most worthy of notice in London.

'After my few days of grace had thus been consumed, I repaired to the office in which Lord F—— had kindly provided me a situation. Here I was rendered somewhat indignant on observing boys like

myself look down upon me; and my astonishment was excited to the uttermost, on finding that most in my office, few of whom were greatly my superiors in age, possessed habits so very different to my own. They were, pert, conceited, and overbearing. They could resort to the coffee-houses—talk of politics—and occasionally confirm their ignorant opinions with an oath. They could apparently command their small income to decorate their persons and feed their vanity; and, with all these advantages, they supposed themselves elevated to the rank of men, and even of *gentlemen.*

'I was shocked at these manners, and avoided their society as much as was compatible with the duties of my station. Would that I had always done so! But time wore away the impressions which nature and domestic habits had made upon me; and I became less affected by their evil practices. Sometimes I even found a slight temptation, from the pride of my heart, to equal and surpass them in their own way, by means which I felt I had so entirely within my reach.

'Among these associates, there were some, however, who possessed good parts and kind dispositions; and who seemed anxious, as they termed it, to make me one of themselves, and put me on a *better footing* in the office. The repetition of their requests, joined with those friendly intentions, for which I gave them credit, dissolved my resolutions; and, if I did not run to their excesses, I did sufficient, frequently, to bring an uneasy weight of guilt upon my conscience.

'Perhaps one of the worst effects of this intercourse was, that it begat light thoughts of religion and of the sabbath. I well remember the feelings of one sabbath, which I had devoted to recreation and amusement; and which, as my companions insisted, were so needful after the confinement and labour of the week. I returned, in the evening, to my dwelling, more fatigued than by the duties of any common day, and dissatisfied with pleasures which my heart told me were mixed with sin. I retired to my chamber. Former days came to my mind. The words of

my mother—"*Beware of the snares of London!*"—sunk in my heart. I sighed—I thought I would beware in future—I kneeled down, and prayed to God to be my keeper.

'Must I tell you, my friend, how soon these impressions were removed, and my vows broken!—that they were often renewed, and as often violated, with more carelessness of the consequences each time!—so that I know not what I might have been at this moment, but for a season of affliction.

'A pleurisy brought me near to the grave. My recovery was long and doubtful; I had, therefore, much time for reflection. I was truly concerned for my situation. I read my Bible. I felt that all my professions of "goodness had passed away like the morning cloud;" and I bemoaned myself like Ephraim before God. I almost dreaded recovery, lest I should live to be led into temptation; and again, with more fervor, I entreated a superior Power to preserve me.

'I said that a disregard to the sabbath

was the source of most of the evils I had committed; and I especially determined to keep it holy. On my restoration, my first care was to put this purpose into effect. This, I am thankful to say, I was enabled to do. I frequently heard the the Rev. Messrs. Cecil and Pratt with much benefit; but I more regularly attended the ministry of the Rev. John Newton. You know his excellencies; I need not dwell upon them. It may be sufficient to say, that I hope his ministry established those convictions which had been revived by my illness; encouraged me to go forward in the ways of religion; and excited me to that zeal for the welfare of others, which led to our interview and friendship.

'As to my subsequent experience, it is nearly as well known to you as to myself. Happy is it for me,' said he, looking on Douglas with a smile, 'that I have now a friend to whom I can freely communicate on the most important concerns.'

'Thank you, my dear Charles!' said Douglas, taking him by the hand, 'thank you! let us believe and be "confident of

this one thing, that he who hath begun this good work, will perform it to the day of Jesus Christ."'

'Ah!' said Lefevre, 'it is easy to believe, that when the work is begun, it will be perfected; but the difficulty with me often is, to ascertain *whether it is begun*.'

'That indeed,' rejoined Douglas, 'is the material point. And, in endeavouring to decide upon it, we should make it as *simple* as possible. Every thing relative to the *manner* and *circumstance* of the work should be forgotten in the question; and the attention engrossed by the *work itself*. —*Is the work begun?*'

'This' is an important distinction,' said Lefevre, 'I shall be glad to say more on the subject at a suitable opportunity.— But see, the sky is overcast before us—we shall have rain.'

'Ah!' said Douglas, 'it is a picture of one's experience—sunshine and rain, rain and sunshine. But this is not our rest!—We will renew the subject another time.'

## CHAPTER IV.

THE illness of Douglas had placed the friends before each other in the most interesting lights. Lefevre had witnessed the resignation, cheerfulness and gratitude of Douglas under suffering; and Douglas had been astonished at the assiduous, disinterested and untiring attention of Lefevre. Their friendship had now acquired every thing except what additional time and experience could give it; and seldom has there been an intimacy so strong or so self-denying. Their concern seemed transferred from themselves to each other; and the question generally was, how will this affect *my friend?* rather than, how will this affect *me?* Their names were frequently connected with those of David and Jonathan; and those who knew them, felt that the association was easy and natural. To an observing eye, however, it would still appear, that *tenderness* characterised the

friendship of the one, and *energy* that of the other; yet, such was the power of assimilation in this attachment, that Douglas seemed occasionally to rise to the energy of Lefevre, whilst Lefevre sometimes softened into the tenderness of Douglas.

Our young friends were now encreasingly desirous of each other's society. They had often found their distance an obstacle to communion; and Lefevre had resolved to remove it. He, accordingly, made an arrangement for his residence with a Mr. and Mrs. Russell: an arrangement which, not only brought them nearer together, but which also greatly promoted the pleasure of their intercourse, as the persons referred to were much esteemed by them both, and had a real interest in their welfare. As these worthy persons will more or less be blended with the subsequent history, it may be suitable to introduce them to the reader.

Mr. Russell was unusually tall, portly, and of fine presence; with such an appearance of strength and dignity as to excite unmixed awe in the mind, had it not been

united with a remarkable expression of meekness and benevolence in his countenance. His dispositions were habitually calm, contemplative, and devotional. He had become almost 'the man of one book,' and that book was the Bible; and on this he seemed rather to feed than to speculate. Religion with him was not so much an object of pursuit, as the element in which he constantly dwelt. Its influence appeared to raise him above this life; and you would have thought him unconnected with earth, had it not have been for the affection he discovered as a husband, a father, and a friend. He passed through the world as a pilgrim, ignorant of its cunning, and unruffled by its uproar; and, if, in his passage, some events had power to agitate the surface of his passions, like the deep sunk well, he seemed to contain beneath those fresh springs of happiness, which were inaccessible to all external accidents.

On the whole, there was something highly apostolic about him. Frequently, after Douglas and Lefevre have witnessed his serene and heavenly piety, rendered

impressive by a majestic figure, crowned with locks bleached to the whiteness of snow by the hand of time, have they repeated those beautiful lines of Goldsmith:

"Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm;
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Mrs. Russell, on the other hand, appeared the contrast of her husband. Her person was short, but by no means unpleasant. Active, generous, susceptible, and communicative, she readily secured that confidence which recoils from all the doublings of cold hearted selfishness. She was devoted to her husband, and overflowed with fondness to her offspring. In piety she was not at all behind Mr. Russell; but, whilst it was the same in principle and equal in strength, it differed amazingly in many of its features. It was the same in the spring, but it received the colouring of the several channels through which it flowed. If the piety of Mr. Russell seemed to delight in still communion, that of Mrs.

Russell seemed to exult in holy and active obedience. If the fire of his devout affections seemed to rise, like a sacrificial flame, immediately to heaven, her's seemed to linger on the earth to enlighten and animate those around her. If religion in him appeared to raise the mind superior to the events of this life; in her, whilst it was, 'as an anchor sure and stedfast,' it left it still susceptible of their influence. Temporal sorrow could reduce her to momentary despondency; temporal disappointment could lash her into vexation; and temporal happiness could exalt her to the ecstacies of joy.

With all this contrariety there were not wanting the strongest ties of union. Even the particulars in which these worthy persons differed, as they daily convinced them they were necessary to each other's existence, had a tendency to strengthen their attachments. In the most entire concord, they had seen forty summer suns pass away; and time had so far smoothed, and proportioned, and united, their distinct characteristics, as to make them almost

*one* person. And, if to reduce their oppo-site characters wholly to one existence, was not within the power of time, it was within the province of nature. Providence had given them one son, who seemed to be formed from a mere mixture of their two natures.

Lefevre had no sooner entered under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Russell, than he found himself at home, and looked up to his friends as a son to his parents. Respect-ful, sociable, and happy, he formed a pleasing addition to their comforts. He regularly united in their morning and eve-ning devotions; and passed his spare hours in their society: sometimes entertaining them by the tidings of the day, and some-times freely conversing with them on the serious topics of religion.

Our young friends having now the fullest opportunity for interview, resolved to employ it for their radical improvement. They were aware that it was not enough to have the mere desire of knowledge; they must adopt regular methods in the pursuit of it, if their wishes were to be

successful. With this conviction, they sat down to give some certain direction to their studies; and, at length determined, that, generally, their attention should be given to Languages, Natural Philosophy, History, English Literature, and Theology.

As to Languages, they agreed to perfect themselves in the principles of the English Tongue; deeming it truly ridiculous to pursue others whilst palpably deficient in their own. In addition to this, Lefevre decided in improving his slight acquaintance with the Latin, and commencing the study of the Hebrew, as favorable to his knowledge of biblical truth: and Douglas, having already made some progress in Latin and Hebrew, took the Greek grammar in hand. In reference to the other heads of study, it was resolved, that, as Douglas possessed the better knowledge of books, he should draw up such a course of reading on them, as would be most likely to afford mutual profit.

To render their plans the more efficacious, they farther proposed, that they should unite with themselves a few other

young persons, who had a love of knowledge, to form a society for general improvement. This was soon accomplished, and the principal regulations of it were, that the members should subscribe to establish a library for common use, and that they should meet once a fortnight: at one meeting, reading aloud some esteemed author, with liberty to remark on the manner of the reader, or the contents of the work; and, at the alternate meeting, delivering, in rotation, an essay on some moral or religious topic, which should also be liable to discussion.

Such was the plan they laid down; and now they combined their energies for its execution. Considering that they had but few hours in the day at their own disposal, it may be thought they proposed too much to themselves; but, is it not better to see youth in the first ardor of feeling grasp at too much, than grasp at nothing worthy of regard? 'He who aims at the stars will certainly shoot farther than he who aims at the pebbles beneath his feet;' and our young friends, if

they did not reach all they designed, yet made rapid and important attainments.

Surely all who feel an interest in the progress of the youthful character, must have pleasure in beholding so strong an attachment, yielding such valuable fruits. How many who, at this period of life, boast of similar friendships, suffer their affection to spend itself in frivolous enjoyments! They seek to support friendship, by flattering each other's vanity, or the gratification of sensual appetite. They meet together without an object; and, lest they should say nothing, they venture to ridicule, to satirize, and thoughtlessly, perhaps, to slander characters they are not prepared to appreciate. Or, if their pretensions are higher, they content themselves with glancing at the mere title pages of books; and, by reading a few periodical publications, they catch the tone of literary men, and assert their borrowed opinions with all the flippancy and presumption of ignorance.

Lefevre and Douglas on the contrary, had always a serious and noble object before them. They had no time for vanity

and folly; and so they were under no temptation to them; and, yet, they have often referred to the hours thus spent, as amongst the happiest of their lives. They had the testimony of their consciences, that they were well employed; they were strangers to wearisomeness or *ennui* in each other's society; time being occupied, left them no regret but the speed of its flight: and, it may be easily concluded, that the similarity of their labours, their cares, and their enjoyments, had no feeble influence on the bands of their friendship.

## CHAPTER V.

ROMANTIC notions are at once the charm and the snare of youth. On no subject are they more freely indulged than on that of friendship. That friendship must exist without the least alloy of earthly motive; that it must be confined to one object; that it must exist without interruption and for ever; are sentiments, more or less, entertained by most young persons of ardent and generous tempers, with little or no experience. If these notions had any undue influence on the mind of Douglas, the following letter doubtless served as a corrective to some of them.

*Mr. Lefevre to Mr. Douglas.*

'My very Dear Friend,

'You will wonder at receiving this note from me after our usual meeting last

evening; but, I must confess to you, I felt something like disappointment. I thought you seemed very low; and Mr. Russell agreed with me in that opinion. I cannot avoid feeling that you have something pressing heavily on your spirits, and yet you would not say any thing to me on the subject.

'Why should you be so reserved? Do I want affection for you? Am I undeserving of your confidence? You cannot tell how much it distresses me to think you are suffering from any *unknown* cause! What would I not do to help you! But if you continue reserved, you must excuse me if I become so.

'Trust me, my dear friend; I will prove myself worthy.—How many thousands there are who are no more fitted for friendship than the heathen! I could as soon be persuaded to abandon the walks of religion and literature as to form an intimacy with such. But with you I have formed an entire and indissoluble friendship. Let me, then, have the pleasure of sharing your cares, your thoughts, and your perplexities.

'Mr. and Mrs. Russell present their respects, and wish me to say, they will be glad to see you to tea to-morrow evening.

'I am, my very dear friend,

'Your's ever affectionately,

'CHARLES LEFEVRE.'

Happily for Douglas, however, he was not much influenced by the sentiments referred to at the head of the chapter. Young as he was, he had lived to see the dissolution of one *eternal* friendship; and, although he possessed very powerful and generous feelings, they were generally kept under the steady government of the understanding. In the present case, the friendship of Lefevre had recently assumed such a vehement character, as to create a fear in his bosom, which yet he would not acknowledge to himself, that their intimacy might be troubled with some of those uneasinesses, which never fail to attend the excess of every passion.

Notwithstanding all this preparation of mind, the letter of Lefevre filled him

with surprise and regret. They had enjoyed a long, and exalted, and profitable friendship. Every interview, and every pursuit, had brought them nearer to each other; and this was the first incident of an unpleasant nature. He read the letter once and again. A number of ideas rushed into his mind, and he was deeply affected. The following reply seems to contain his impressions after they were cooled by reflection.

*Mr. Douglas to Mr. Lefevre.*

'MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

'Lest I should forget it at the close of this letter, I commence by requesting you to present my respectful compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Russell, and to say that I shall have great pleasure in embracing their invitation to-morrow evening. Although this is my intention, I proceed to notice the contents of your's; as I cannot suffer any time to be lost in allaying the uneasiness under which you labour. I must, however, in few words, assure you

that the cause of your uneasiness dwells only in your own imagination. I do not suffer from any dejection of mind. I have no care pressing on my spirits, with which you are unacquainted; and, whilst in your society yesterday, I was not sensible of any peculiar depression. If, then, I really discovered lowness of spirits, it must be ascribed to those interruptions of cheerful and social intercourse, which often arise even from the petty circumstances of life; and often, as in myself, from a changeful state of bodily health.

'With this explanation in your hand, I must leave you to judge of my impressions, when I found you charging me with reserve, and asking me doubtfully, whether I thought you wanted affection, or were unworthy of confidence! I would also submit another subject to your decision—whether your intimations of my want of confidence, do not really prove a serious deficiency on your own part? O, Charles, how could you think that I doubted your affection?—that I was determined to act with reserve, whilst I professed an open

friendship? What evidence have I ever given you either of the one or the other? Surely that confidence must be weak indeed, that is reduced to doubt on the first suggestions of an unfounded imagination. I have seen *you* under all the changes of temper to which you are liable; but they never tempted me, for a moment, to doubt your confidence, or to withhold my own.

'I know, in your more sober thoughts, you will despise the fears you have cherished, and resume your usual confidence. Let me, however, take the opportunity of recommending, as one of its best securities, that you do not expect *too much* from your friend. If you take a friend, you must take him with those frailties which are common to humanity; and from which he will not be fully delivered till mortality is swallowed up of life. The most correct understanding has its prejudices; the finest temper has its irregularities; and, in friendship, a certain strength of mind is necessary, to rise above these mere *accidents* of character, and to settle on those excellencies which are unaffected

by circumstances, with undoubting assurance.

'I thank you for your expressions of interest and attachment. I feel with you, that there are not many persons with whom I could hold all the closest intimacies of friendship. Let us not, however, exult unnecessarily over human deficiencies. The more we know of our own defects, the more candid shall we become towards those of others; and, certainly, a good mind will always regard them rather with sorrow than contempt. Let us also consider, that "the thousands" with whom we have but little sympathy, may often be prepared by the wisdom of Providence, for other friendships; and, in a different sphere to our's, may fill their station with equal, perhaps with superior, propriety. On nothing is mistake so general as on *character*. We are young, let us be modest.

'Reassure me of your confidence; and firmly believe that, where I *confide at all, I confide altogether*.

'Your's most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

This letter put Lefevre's conduct before him in a light in which he had not before seen it; and, in his turn, he became full of anxious concern. He waited impatiently for their appointed meeting. When Douglas arrived, he hastened towards him, clasping his hand with eagerness, and exclaiming, 'Forgive me, my dear Douglas! I have injured you! I do not entertain any of those doubts my letter seemed to imply. Impute them to an excessive interest in your welfare.'

'I dislike to boast of forgiveness,' replied Douglas, 'as it appears to involve superiority. At present it is needless, as I do not feel offended. I knew you too well to believe, from two or three hasty lines, you could seriously think me capable either of reserve or suspicion.'

'You are generous—you are generous, my dear friend!' cried Lefevre. 'I hope this little misunderstanding will produce a good effect.'

'I trust it will,' returned Douglas. 'It may, if wisely improved, promote the steadiness of our friendship, without im-

pairing its warmth. But,' continued he smiling, 'because some good may arise from this misunderstanding, pray don't conclude that they are *favourable* to friendship; and that it is worth while to quarrel for the pleasure of reconciliation.'

'I take your hint,' said Lefevre, 'I will be on my guard. But, by the by, does not this seem to be a sort of term in the friendship of many?'

'Some foolish persons appear to act on the maxim if they have not formally adopted it,' said Douglas. 'Those persons, however, who can really injure the feelings of a friend, to purchase that excitement which accompanies reconciliation, have not the *primary* qualification for friendship. Friction may be necessary to give warmth to a heartless coalition; but it fritters away the fine sensibilities of friendship. At least, I feel this is true as far as I am concerned. I can only rest on that bosom which peace and confidence inhabit.'

The summons now arrived to attend the tea-table of Mrs. Russell. As they

were leaving the room to obey it, Lefevre accosted his friend, 'stay one minute, my dear James, I wanted to ask you when you commence your journey.'

'I am not quite certain as to the day. Have you arranged, as you proposed, to join me at F—— and proceed on a visit to your good mother?'

'I believe I have secured the consent of my superiors, you shall know dates, &c. before you leave. My mother is on 'the tiptoe of expectation,' not permitting herself to think of disappointment in seeing her son and 'the friend of her son.''

'May she meet with none!' said Douglas, affectionately, as they entered the hospitable apartment of the Russells.

## CHAPTER VI.

AGREEABLY to the proposed arrangement, Lefevre met his friend Douglas at F——; and in his company passed forward to the place of his birth and education. They arrived in safety in the afternoon of the day, without any occurrence worthy of notice. No sooner had the carriage driven up to the door of his mother's residence, than it flew open, and the anxious parent stood in the passage eager, once more, to embrace her child: 'Charles, my dear Charles!' exclaimed she, seizing his hand, and impressing a kiss on his cheek, 'how glad I am to see you.' Then, recollecting herself, she turned to Mr. Douglas, and presenting her hand, said—'Welcome, Sir, to my roof,—*twice* welcome,—on my son's account and on your own. Although I have never had the pleasure of seeing you before,' added she, smiling, 'I know you well by description.'

Mrs. Lefevre was tall and rather full featured. Her countenance was composed of a set of well proportioned and handsome features, and united to express, in a powerful degree, that entire good nature which never fails to excite love and dependance. Her manners seemed admirably adapted to support the impression made by her countenance. Without a particle of affectation, or the knowledge of etiquette, she discovered that genuine politeness, which ever flows from a benevolent regard to the comfort of others, and which can flow from nothing else. To an intelligent observer, there was something in her look, that spoke of manifold trials and vicissitudes; but, it was not grief, nor vexation, nor discontent; it was that softened composure and exalted complacence, which are sometimes produced by sanctified affliction. The repetition of her sorrows had given her the habit of yielding to them; so that, like the April sun shining in the midst of passing clouds, she seemed to smile on all the *common* accidents of life.

It was not till long after she had become a wife and a mother, that she was suitably affected by religion. Reflection, domestic suffering, the emptiness of the world, and the reading of the scriptures, appear to have been the instruments in accomplishing the change; which yet was wrought in so silent and gradual a way, that she was greatly perplexed in referring either to the time or manner of it. It was evident, however, to every one, that she had passed from darkness to light, although the tints of light and shades of darkness were at first so melted into each other, that it was impossible to say where light began and where darkness terminated. If her religious views were limited; they were simple and scriptural. She found herself to be a sinner—depraved, helpless, and lost: she relied on the promises of the Redeemer for her salvation; her heart flowed with gratitude in recollection of his love; and she delighted to express it by running in the way of his holy commandments. All her knowledge seemed to be practical; and, so powerful

and uniform was its influence, that divine grace in her appeared less in the character of a combatant struggling for superiority, than of a sovereign reigning with undisputed control. There was nothing in her benevolent disposition that would amalgamate with conceited opinion, domineering bigotry, or bitter disputation; and, had she been told how far these had prevailed in the church, she would have thought it nearly incredible. She knew what the world was; but, so confined was her knowledge of the members of the church, that, assisted by that 'charity which hopeth all things,' she believed, with few exceptions, all were liberal, kind, and humble as herself!

The visitors having retired to their chambers to refresh themselves by a change of dress, now joined Mrs. Lefevre around the tea-table. Scarcely can we conceive of a more happy party. The mother's benevolent countenance was animated with affectionate pleasure on seeing her dear son, now so much improved, take his accustomed seat by her side. Lefevre was

raised to unusual cheerfulness, and seemed to greet with the smile of old acquaintanceship every chair, and table, and picture in the room. Whilst Douglas was evidently enjoying that refined happiness, which is experienced only by those, who can fully sympathize in the happiness of others.

After looks and smiles had been frequently interchanged, and the first feelings had passed away, Lefevre said, 'Well, my dear mother, I am truly glad to see you again!'

'The joy, my dear, is mutual,' replied Mrs. Lefevre, whilst her eye moistened. 'It is seven long years, the 29th of last month, since your mother could look round and see you by her side. Ah! how often have I thoughtlessly looked round for you, and have sighed on recollecting you were so many miles distant!'

'And, how many changes have occurred since our separation!' said Lefevre, endeavouring to give a slight turn to the conversation.

'Changes indeed! In you alone what

changes do I see! I sent you away a child, and now,' said she, with a glowing countenance, 'you return to me a man! But,' continued she, with a more serious air, 'of all changes, no one was half so delightful to me, as that religious one to which you have referred in your letters. Blessed be that hand which guided you into the ways of wisdom! "All her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are paths of peace!" Mr. Douglas I am sure,' looking towards him, 'will forgive the feelings of a mother. I never thought Charles was secure from the snares of London till he became religious. Nothing but *religion* can uphold the slippery footsteps of youth!'

Silence now became necessary to their feelings. When they had recovered their calmness, and the tea-table was cleared of the usual refreshments, Lefevre began to detail every thing to his mother relative to himself, his connection, and the metropolis, which he thought would interest her: his friend Douglas frequently joining, as the statement led to conversation.

Considerable time had flowed in this way when Lefevre, finding his topics pretty well exhausted, looked pleasantly round and said, 'Well mother and what news have you for us? I suppose every thing in this quiet, sleepy town stands just as it did. The sheep graze on the hills—the boys play in the priory—the vane of the steeple dances to the wind—and the mail comes in at ten and goes out at four, just as they did seven years ago.'

'Stop, stop, my dear boy,' said she, smiling, 'not so censorious on your native place. You London folks are indeed the great newsmongers; but still we have a share; and, as we make *much of a little*, we are perhaps on the whole as well off as yourselves.'

'Well then,' rejoined he, 'pray have the goodness to entertain us with some of the best of your news.'

'Most gladly, my dear, but I scarcely know where to begin,—perhaps,' said she, 'I had better begin at the bottom of the town and so proceed to the top. Well then, you remember the field between the

church-yard and the priory?—it is a field no longer,—it is covered with comfortable dwellings.'

'Indeed!'

'We have also a new rector come to the church, a Dr. Mills; a very excellent man and full of zeal. He is most attentive to his parishioners. In addition to the usual duties of the church, he has opened his house for evening worship; and a fine hall full he has I assure you, for many were induced to go to the rectory, who never thought of going to the church.'

'This is excellent news!' exclaimed Lefevre.

'Yes,' said Douglas, 'and I hope much good will result from it.'

'Well,' resumed Mrs. Lefevre, looking thoughtfully, as though passing in recollection over different spots of the well-known town, 'There is Mr. Palmer, who used to take so much notice of you. By his industry and good conduct he has become very rich, and has lately been made a magistrate. He is just the same man now

that he was in humbler life, and every body speaks well of him. Some, indeed, say that he has strange notions about religion, and I believe they call him Presbyterian. To this I cannot speak. But one thing I know, that he is a *Christian*, and a *good one;* and I think we ought to love all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," by whatever name the world may choose to call them;' looking, as she finished the sentence, towards Douglas, as if to obtain his concurrence.

'I think with you entirely,' said he, with earnestness, deeply sympathizing in her benevolent sentiments. 'We should revere and love a truly good man, wherever we may find him. The proper name of such a person is *Christian*. It is a lamentation that any other name should prevail in the religious world; but, since our ignorance and wilfulness have made them necessary, by all means let them be held in charity. For my own part, no appellation is dear to me compared to that *primitive one,* which is immediately derived from our Lord and Master. Introduce me to a

person as a *mere* Churchman, Presbyterian, Independent, or Methodist; I feel no interest in him *as such*; but tell me *he is a Christian*; and I feel insensibly united to him by stronger sympathies than those of earthly relationship. At least,' said he, dropping his voice and looking diffidently, 'this is what I aspire to. I ought not perhaps to presume, whilst I see so much bigotry on these subjects, that there are no shreds of it remaining in myself: but certainly I desire to tear them from my heart!'

'You would not, however,' said Lefevre, 'have my mother to understand, that you think it totally a matter of indifference what opinions we form on the subject for ourselves?'

'Undoubtedly not,' replied Douglas, 'I think we should conscientiously consult the scriptures, and decidedly embrace the opinions which they appear to warrant; and carefully hold them with that meekness and charity they inculcate. And there are two considerations, which I believe will be admitted by wise and unprejudiced persons of every denomi-

nation, and which, I have often thought, if properly weighed, would teach us mutual forbearance, and raise the mind superior to the *punctilios* of any party. The one is, *that the New Testament furnishes us with* GENERAL PRINCIPLES *rather than with particular laws* for the government of the church; and the other is, *that there is no body of institutes adopted by* ANY DENOMINATION, *that can be supposed so pure as to be* ALTOGETHER FREE *from human error and prejudice.*'

'And, although we have something to deplore,' observed Lefevre, 'I think we may rejoice in hope, that the truly christian sentiments of benevolence and forbearance are spreading widely through every denomination. Our public societies have wonderfully cherished and extended them.'

'They have,' replied Douglas. 'Their institution forms a new era in the history of our country; and it will eventually be found to be one of the most splendid. Yet let us not forget to look forward to a promised period, in which every name shall

be merged in the common name of our Lord. There shall be neither Jew nor Greek, Bond nor Free, Conformist nor Nonconformist—but *all one* in Christ Jesus.'

The happy party rested in the conversation. Their thoughts dwelt with holy anticipation on the promised *sabbath of the world*, when every unfriendly feeling shall be absorbed by divine love; when all men shall become christians, and the hearts of all christians become as the heart of one man.

Mrs. Lefevre was the first to renew the intercourse. 'Charles you remember Caroline?'

'O yes,' returned Lefevre, with an assumed gaiety, 'we have had many an innocent frolic together. Is she well?'

'She is dead!' said Mrs. Lefevre.

'Dead!'—exclaimed Charles, with a tone of voice, which led Douglas to think, that the utterance of that word had, in a moment, destroyed some half-formed desires in his mind, of which he was scarcely conscious.

'Yes, she is dead,' rejoined Mrs. Le-

fevre; 'she died three weeks ago, after a lingering and painful illness. Sweet girl! I often visited her in affliction, and always found her humble and patient; but, as she came near her end, she was filled with hope and joy.'

Observing the interest of her auditors, and her own feelings being now excited, Mrs. Lefevre proceeded: 'I was with her when she died; and I shall never forget that solemn hour. When I approached her side, she put her hand into mine, and looking on me with eyes full of love, she said "My dear Mother," (for so she used to call me) "you are come to see your child die. You have been very kind to me. Let me give you one *last* kiss." We kissed each other. I could not speak to her. I looked on her tenderly. She caught my looks, and said, "I know you love me, and I love you; but I shall love you better in heaven." Slight convulsions affected the muscles of her face. She shortly recovered; and smiling pleasantly, said, with a firmer voice than before—"Don't be afraid! I have no fears; they are all fled. Jesus is with me; he comforts me."

'Now, while you hear my heart strings break,
How sweet my moments roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul!'

'Seeing those about her bed weep, she said, "Don't weep! I am going home; I have had no home in this world since I lost my dear parents.—I shall soon rejoin them.—I shall dwell with them for ever.—I shall be holy—I shall be happy! Come, Lord Jesus, come."

'Strong convulsions seized her. She spoke no more. In a short interval of ease, she turned her dying eyes to me, with a look of heavenly sweetness; and, raising her pale hand from the bed, waved it in the air as a sign of victory, and just afterwards expired.'

Mrs. Lefevre paused to ease her feelings; and finding that neither Douglas, nor her son, were disposed to speak, she continued, turning towards the latter. 'In one of my visits to her, when she found her recovery was hopeless, she took, from beneath her pillow, a small testament, and put it into my hand, saying, "Charles gave me this little book nearly eight years ago.

Give it to him, and tell him, that I kept it for *his* sake, as long as I could, and, I, now, hope he will keep it for *mine*."'

Lefevre was much agitated. He shifted in his chair, crossed his legs, and passed his hand over his forehead, as if to hide the discomposure of his countenance.

'Dear girl,' resumed Mrs. Lefevre, much affected by her own narration, 'she was as one of my own children to me! She was in health just what she was in sickness; so kind—so modest—so pious! She seemed never so happy as when devoting her spare hours to the comfort of the sick, the assistance of the poor, or the instruction of ignorant children. She used to say, "*We must live to do good;*" and it seemed as though she wished to do good after her death, for she ordered this striking inscription to be engraven on her tombstone:—

I FOUND REDEMPTION

THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB:

READER, HAST THOU?'

## CHAPTER VII.

THE ensuing morning, having breakfasted, a walk was proposed.

'I suppose,' said Mrs. Lefevre, 'you will walk to the Wells; they are greatly improved within these few years.'

'I should like to see them,' said Douglas; 'but I should be better pleased to find our way to some of your cottages.'

'O, yes,' cried Lefevre, 'I have not lost sight of them. We can easily enjoy that treat, by making a little curve from the public road, on our way.'

'And pray,' said Mrs. Lefevre, with a smile which shewed how fully she participated in the pleasures of the young friends, 'pray make a *little curve* in your way back, and call on old nurse Graham. I am sure she will delight Mr. Douglas.'

Lefevre having lodged Cowper in his pocket, and Douglas having deposited in his, a few cottage tracts; they now started

for their morning excursion. It was one of the finest days in July. The sun was rising in glory; but his heat was so tempered by the occasional intervention of clouds, joined with a strong breeze from the north-west, as to make the exercise of walking more than agreeable. Whilst they continued on the skirts of the town, Lefevre entertained his friend by referring to all those spots which were dear to him, by the recollections of infancy and childhood; and, so fully did Douglas sympathize in his feelings, that you might have supposed every present object was endeared to him by similar remembrances.

They soon, however, lost sight of the town; and continued in more general conversation, till they approached a pretty and retired hamlet, consisting of five or six cottages, at some distance from each other. They introduced themselves to three of them; caressed the children; comforted the infirm and aged; talked freely to the ignorant; and left some tracts behind them to carry forward the work. The poor people received them with kindness, and

seemed grateful for the notice taken of them.

At the last of the cottages, as the father of the family was opening the hatch-door to let them out, he said, with a look of seriousness 'I'm sure, gentlemen, it's 'mazing good o'ye, to come and sit down so humble like, and talk to we poor creturs; a thousand blessings on ye!'

'What then,' said Lefevre, 'must be the amazing goodness of that Saviour we have been speaking of, who came down from heaven to talk to poor wretched sinners, and to save them!'

'Vastly good, indeed, sir,' returned the father, with emotion. 'I'll think more about what ye ha' said. But I's apt to think, if all ye say be right, many o'us shall find it a sad tough job to get to heaven at last.'

'Well,' said Lefevre, 'pray read your bible. That book will make all plain and easy. Good day!'

'Good day, gentlemen!' said the father, bending his person; whilst a good tempered boy, about five years old, hang-

ing on the gate, cried out, 'Come agin! Come agin, soon!'

They waved their hands to the child; proceeded on their way; and, shortly afterwards, arrived at the Wells.

Here all was noise, and parade, and luxury.

'I scarcely know how it is,' said Douglas, as he escaped from one of the more crowded paths, 'but these haunts of dissipation affect me with melancholy. And, as I have never seen a watering-place whose neighbourhood is more rich in the beauties of nature, I seem more than usually affected. There is nothing in the loveliness of nature that *sorts* with "the pride of life."'

'Perhaps,' said Lefevre, 'the passages we have just been reading from Cowper, may have deepened the impression with you, as I think they have with me.'

'Very likely,' said Douglas; 'but the scene needs no auxiliaries. Poor creatures! the majority seem to be dancing on the precipices of ruin, and are not content while the dance continues. They are la-

'bouring to unite idleness with happiness—health with debauchery; and evidently look disappointed that they cannot. They veil their uneasiness, indeed, with a smile, and hope at least to be *thought* happy; but nobody is deceived by it; every observer sees it is not the smile of innocence and light-hearted gaiety; it is the smile of vacancy and hypocrisy.'

'And,' said Lefevre, 'if that were not the case, perhaps, we know enough by experience to give us the liberty of judging of their circumstances.'

'True, my dear Charles. And, O, what do we not owe to that blessed hand, which snatched us early from the ways of folly!'

They soon quitted these scenes of vanity; and, returning to the quiet of shaded lanes and cheerful fields, took a homeward direction, alternately walking forward in sweet fellowship, and seating themselves on the root of a tree, to read the poet who accompanied them. As they turned the angle of a path, they came suddenly in sight of a cottage, which Charles pro-

nounced to be nurse Graham's. In a few minutes they came up to it.

It was a neat, little, thatched cottage; white washed within and without; and was seated on a gentle declivity, terminating in the public road, which appeared about a quarter of a mile distant. Before it was a small but clean garden. The beds of it, immediately under the window, were devoted to flowers. Here the rose in its full beauty had succeeded in nearly concealing the latticed window; and its rival the lily, by its erect attitude, seemed aspiring to similar distinction. On the left hand side of the door stood an old elm tree, so injured by time, as to have no symptoms of life, except what were found in a few young branches springing from the outer side of the trunk. At its foot grew a large handsome honeysuckle, one half of which ran over the body of the tree, as if anxious to conceal the frailties of age. The other half, first surmounting the door-way, and suspending its tendrils gracefully, so as to present its blossoms and its sweets to the inhabitant, finally

rested its weight in the bosom of a sweet brier. Above the cottage were seen the heads of some fine young trees, whose fresh foliage overshadowed the upper part of the roof, and concealed its gable ends from the eye of the spectator. Behind it was a small paddock, in which a cow was feeding; and, on either hand, were fine sloping fields covered with corn, glowing in the sun and rustling to the breeze.

This spot was a favorite resort of the fashionables at the Wells; and nurse Graham used to make a principal part of her subsistence by selling to them whey and biscuits

The first objects that presented themselves on coming up to the cottage were two fine boys. One, about ten years of age, was chasing a butterfly on the sunny hill; and, in the eagerness of his pursuit, took no notice of the passengers. The other, about five years of age, was reclining on the side of a little pool, formed by a land spring on the edge of the pathway, watching and governing the motions of a bit of shapeless wood,

as it was influenced by the eddies of the water. He just looked up and smiled as they passed, and then restored his attention to his amusement.

Lefevre and his friend entered the cottage. The good old woman was sitting at a table by the window, in a large rush bottom chair, the back of which rose so high as to discover its rounded knobs above her shoulders. There was an air of stateliness in her person, strengthened by years; and in her countenance there was a pleasing expression of intelligence and benignity. She had been reading the bible, which still lay open before her, with her right hand, holding her spectacles, and resting upon its leaves. The glowing light of the sun was so broken by the intervention of the rose tree as to fall alike on its pages and her countenance, as if to intimate at once, that a celestial light is necessary to understand the sacred volume, and that she was the happy possessor of it.

'Well, nurse Graham, how do you do?' said Lefevre.

She looked wistfully upon him, as though recovering a recollection of his person.

'What, don't you know me?' said he, advancing as he spake.

'Why sure 'tis master Charles! ah! my eyes are not so quick as they were fifty years ago! Yes, 'tis Master—*Mister* Charles Lefevre,' she continued, correcting herself, and busily exploring the features of his face. ''Tis the very face you were born with; and I'm glad to see you with all my heart. Sit down. Sit down sir,' addressing herself to Douglas.

They were immediately seated and Lefevre continued:—

'What, you are reading the best of books, nurse?

'The bible,' said she, 'yes, it is the best of books indeed! It is my food, my medicine, and my comfort. It lies on my table all day, and under my pillow all night. O! what should such a poor widow as I do, without such a comfort!'

'Have you long known its value?' asked Lefevre, with a design to draw her into conversation to gratify his friend.

'Alas! no sir,' said she, 'and I shall never forgive myself for neglecting it so long.

'When I was a girl, like many other girls, I was foolish, giddy, and thoughtless. I was the first in the merry circle on the green, and the last out of it. My light heart seemed to dance within me; and I thought, like the bee, I should gather pleasure from every thing. My fond father used often to sigh and say, "Ah! my dear Matty, grief will soon tread upon your toes;" but still I laughed, and danced, and sang; and cared nothing about what was to come.

'Then I got married,—How I remember the day!—'twas the day our good king George was married. God was very good to me, and gave me a better husband than I deserved.—You might have looked through hill and dale, and not have found such another. And we were very happy; that is, we were as happy as we could be without religion; for, we did not think of God, nor serve him as we ought. O! how happy we should have been, if our hearts had been united by the love of

Christ! However, we were both industrious and good natured, and loved one another dearly; and so, as I said, we were happier than many of our neighbours.—How often, after we have been busy all day, have we sat down snug by the fireside, whilst the cold wind has been howling around the cottage, and chatted away the evening; till he would draw his chair closer to mine, and taking up my hand and looking kindly in my face, would kiss me and say, "Well, my dear Matty, no offence to our good king George, but I think I'm as happy a man as he." 'And I am sure,' I used to say, 'I am as happy as our good queen, be she as happy as she may.' And I think we were, although we were poor, for the great and the rich you know, if they have more comforts they have a vast many more cares; and so it is nearly equal. You remember the milkmaids' song:—

'They that have money are troubled about it,
And they that have none are troubled without it."

So we lived happily together sixteen years,

and then, dear man! he took ill of a fever and in three days he died!

'I was left,' said she, as the tear sprung from her eye, 'a poor miserable widow. Of all our children only one dear boy was alive; but he was as good as a hundred to me. Often, when he saw me fretting for his father, he would say with tears in his eyes,—"Don't cry mother—don't fret—I'll be a comfort to you,—I wish I could be as good as my father!—I'm sure I love you as much."—Dear boy! but he is gone for ever!

'He grew up to be a man. He married, and tried to do every thing to make me happy. Poor fellow! after a time, he seemed tired of a still life; and some loose companions persuaded him, that it would be better for him, and his family, to serve in the wars.—He resolved to go; although his wife and I, begged and prayed that he would not.—He did go.—However, he was always sending us money, and kind letters, and often called himself a fool for leaving his family.—This did not comfort his wife—gentle, good creature.—From the first of

his going, she seemed dead to every thing. It was plain that she was sinking fast to the grave. While I was grieving for her, and hoping John might return to us, news was brought me that my dear, dear, boy was killed!

'Oh! I tremble to think,' said she, with emotion, 'how this went to my heart! I threw myself on the floor, as though I was dead; and, then, I ran about the house as if I was mad. I called upon the name of my dear child, and curst the wars, and they who had led him into them.—What a wicked and rebellious heart was mine! I tried to pray,—but I could not. I tried even to say "thy will be done,"—but I could not.' She paused, evidently grieving at the remembrance of her past conduct.

Mr. Douglas judging of her feeling, said, 'It must always be a matter of grief to the christian, to think of the rebellious temper he has indulged; but, to be sure, your circumstances were remarkably distressing.'

'They were, Sir,' she replied, with an affectionate emphasis, which shewed

she could estimate real sympathy. 'I felt that I was a poor, desolate, childless widow! I lost my last hope in losing my dear boy; and, how did he die? He died on the bloody field—perhaps trampled on, and forsaken.—Oh! he had no mother near him, to kiss his cold lips, to wipe the sweat off his face, and to watch over his mangled body!—perhaps he might have lived if he had! Well—let me not think of it!

'My heart is full,' said she, with an apologizing manner, 'when I remember these things; but do not think that I complain of them. No; I must not complain—I must be thankful. There seemed, as the Apostle says, a needs-be for these afflictions, to bring me to God.—When I lost my husband, I thought more about religion than I had used; yet not enough. But, when I lost my child, all was gone! I had no hope on earth; and no hope in heaven. I read my bible as I never did before; and I found comfort in it, when I could find it no where else. This blessed book (laying her hand on its pages) was a cordial to my broken heart. It led me to

Jesus as my Saviour, and I saw in him more than I wanted: I was helped to put all my trust in his name. O, how happy have I been since I have known the Lord! He is dearer to me than husband, or child, or life! And, though I seem a deserted widow, I feel he is present with me, and that comforts me.'

'And,' said Lefevre, 'have you no cares about the future?'

'Why should I?' replied she, with an animated and happy countenance. 'This book teaches me that God is my Father and Protector. He clothes the lily; and shall he not clothe me? He preserves the sparrow; and shall he not keep me? He feeds the raven; and shall he not feed me? O, I should be of little faith, indeed, if I doubted his goodness. Sometimes, indeed, I have found it hard to make things meet, but I have always seen the promise fulfilled—"Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." And, depend upon it, bread and water, with God's blessing, is good fare.

'Yes,' she continued, 'God is a faith-

ful God. I can trust him with myself, and my two poor orphans. How many promises has he made to the widow and the fatherless! He has said, "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee;" and on that I can depend. I have not long to live, and want but little while I do live; and, when I die, to ascend to heaven—to dwell before the throne of God and my Saviour for ever and ever—O, what joy is it!'

As she ceased, her voice was filled with animation; holy pleasure dwelt on all her countenance; and her soul seemed looking out at her eye, in anticipation of 'the inheritance of the saints in light.'

The happy silence which had prevailed a few moments, was now interrupted by the children, who ran in with rosy and cheerful faces, the elder having a small paper fly-cage in his hand.

'What have you there, my dear?' said Mrs. Graham.

'A butterfly, gran'mother; such a beauty!—only see!—I have had such a run for it.'

'It is very pretty,' said she, looking at it; 'but I cannot bear to have it hurt.

Don't you know I have often told you how good God is to you, and that you should be good to every thing?'

'Yes, gran'mother,' said he; but I don't mean to hurt it.'

'But, my dear John, you do hurt it. You would not injure it like some cruel boys; but do you think it can be happy, shut up in this thing, when God has made it to fly about in the sun and air? Should you be happy if I were to shut you in a dark box, instead of letting you play on the hill?'

'Then I will let it go,' said he, with concern on his face; 'I didn't *mean* to hurt it.'

The child ran to the door cheerfully to liberate the little captive; and afterwards hastened to his grandmother to offer the atoning kiss; whilst the younger child, pressing into Douglas's knees, and looking in his face, said, with an apologizing look, 'He only did it *two times*, and he wo'n't do it again.'

'Sweet child!' said Lefevre, who was standing at the elbow of his friend.

'Ah!' whispered Douglas to him,

'if Nero had had such a parent, Rome had probably blessed him as a benefactor, instead of abhorring him as a blood-thirsty tyrant.'

'They are good children,' resumed Mrs. Graham. 'At first I used to fret, and think it was impossible for an old woman to manage for them. But, so it is, we often complain at what is to be a blessing to us. They are the greatest comfort I have, except my bible. I endeavour to teach them, as far as I know, their duty to God and man; and Dr. Mills says he'll give them their other learning. He is, indeed, a good minister of Jesus Christ. I never read about the Saviour in the Evangelists, but I think of him: he is so like him in every thing he does. He has put John to school, and taught him some verses to repeat to the visitors who come to my humble cottage.'

'Pray let us hear them!' said Lefevre.

John stood forward, and, making a bow, repeated the following stanzas, with so much modesty and sensibility, as deeply to interest and affect his auditors.

## *The Orphan.*

Pause, gracious stranger, pause awhile,
And hear an orphan's tale;
An orphan's piteous tale might make
The ruddiest cheek turn pale.

Ah! once I did not need your ear,
To listen to my woe;
No cause had I to make complaint,
No sorrow did I know:

But, as the lark that mounts the sky,
And sings from morn till night;
So did my little heart rebound
With undisturb'd delight!

Oft did I with my father play,
And prattle on his knee;
And, at those times, I used to think,
No child was glad like me.

But, ere I well could speak his name,
He died on foreign shore;
And then I often sighed and thought
I should be glad no more!

My mother——Oh! 'tis long ago
Since I could call her so;—
I have no mother!—No: she's fled
From this sad world of woe!

My father's death quite broke her heart,
And wither'd all her joy;
She'd look at me, and weep, and say—
"Poor little orphan boy!"

What, mother, is an orphan boy?
I sometimes did reply;
And then she'd sob and weep so much,
I fear'd lest *she* should die!

Full many a month she mourn'd away,
By every sorrow tried;
Till quite worn out, she gently groan'd,
And said—"Poor boy!"—and died.

Ah! how I wept upon her face!
And call'd her name in vain;—
My childish heart could scarce believe
She would not speak again!

And, now I think of that sad day,
My grief is running o'er;
I seem to see my mother die,
And weep her death once more!——

Perhaps you bear a parent's name,
And call your child your joy;
Oh! never may that child become
A wretched orphan boy!

Perhaps the woes that fill my breast
Are partly felt by thine;
You had a father—mother—who
Are dead as well as mine!

Then, whilst I mourn my hapless lot,
O, let your pity flow!
The heart that is itself distress'd,
Should feel another's woe!'

Just as the child finished these verses, some company came up. Lefevre and his friend took the refreshments of the cottage, made a liberal use of their purse, and departed.

'Well,' said Douglas, as they descended towards the road, 'I owe you thanks for giving me a sight of nurse Graham. I wish the world could see religion as she exhibits it. Such simplicity—such contentment — such benevolence — such faith!—She appears like the sun, which, after having been obscured by many a cloud through the day, at last sets in richest splendor, in the midst of a serene and unclouded heaven.'

'She does,' replied Lefevre. 'And,

without knowing one maxim of the philosophers, she surpasses the proudest of them in practice; for, with all her happy contentment, I have reason to think she is very much straitened in her circumstances, especially in the winter.'

'And cannot we do something to assist her?' said Douglas. 'Surely charity cannot be better employed than in her case!'

They soon became busily engaged in determining on the best plan to relieve this aged and estimable widow; nor was the decision wholly made, till Mrs. Lefevre joined in the conference. She entered cordially into their scheme; and measures were immediately adopted for its accomplishment. Soon afterwards they found themselves seated at the dinner-table, feeding with keen appetites on its hospitable provisions; but, with sweeter relish, ruminating on the luxuries of benevolence.

## CHAPTER VIII.



THE evening previous to Douglas's departure from his friend, it was resolved should be spent in each other's society. In fulfilling this design, they descended the town—crossed the bridge—and quickly introduced themselves to the beautiful and romantic domain of Lady T——. In happy mood, they strolled over hill and dale and dingle, till they entered the most favorite walk the neighbourhood afforded.

The walk itself was bedded with the finest elastic moss, and ran forward beyond the sight, till it issued in a serpentine path that penetrated a wilderness of shrubs; while its bounderies to the right and left, were marked by two rows of the noblest elms, which, after rising to an unusual height, formed an elegant latticed canopy above. On the one hand, was a verdant bank where the primrose, the violet, the cowslip, and daffodil dwelt

and flourished in their turns; relieved, occasionally, by the jetting of masses of stone, over which the hazel, the brier, or the clematis was scrambling. On the other hand, a gentle slope adorned with the cedar, the willow, the fir, and the birch, descended to a considerable river, which flowed quietly onward in a line with the path, reflecting and partaking the cheerful tranquillity of the heavens. Beyond the river, was a rich meadow, where a number of cattle were reposing; and from whose farther margin rose the town, scattered on the broken acclivities of a large rock, and mantled by the beauties of vegetation, so as to exhibit an object the most picturesque imaginable. Above the town, stood the ruins of the Priory; having for its back ground, some of the finest hills of which our country can boast: and below it, was a mill driven by a stream, which, after wandering capriciously about the valley, joined the river, from which it had separated itself.

Every thing seemed to contribute to the enjoyment of this spot. The day had

been hot; but the evening breezes were now up. The whole course of the sun had been triumphant; and he appeared determined to throw around his close the utmost degree of splendor.—His ardent beams glowed on the o'erhanging foliage, glittered on the wavy waters, and streamed on the thousand windows of the town, in dazzling glory. All nature was rejoicing in his radiance. The insects were floating in the air,—the fish were springing playfully from the surface of the water,—the birds were raising their evening hymn to the God of day;—while, from the neighbourhood of the Priory, the hum of youthful gaiety swelled and died alternately on the ear.

Our young friends were not insensible to the joyous scene. They were happy in themselves; and their happiness received no small addition, by the appearance of happiness and serenity on the objects around them. They smiled on each other—they smiled on nature;—and, frequently, raised a countenance, glistening with love, above the sublunary clouds. Filled with

sweet reflections, they paced their favorite path, sometimes speaking—sometimes silent; but always holding communion, till thought rose to bliss and bliss to rapture.

At length, body and mind required relief; and they seated themselves beneath a fine cedar on the margin of the river; while their enjoyments became more peaceful and not less satisfactory.

How was the face of nature changed in so short an interval! The last light of the sun had left the hills.—Not a breath stirred the young sprays of the birch, which hung on the water. The birds had ceased to sing, and the cattle to low; the murmurs of the town had passed away, and not a sound was heard, except the gurgling of a streamlet, that was finding its way to the bosom of the river. The moon, enrobed with a fleecy cloud, was ascending the heavens, as sovereign of the night, and, with her soft silvery light, had given her own colouring to all things in nature.

'How lovely is nature,' said Douglas, 'always lovely! She is ever changing,

but her changes leave one no regrets. Like a friend of peculiar delicacy, she seems prepared to receive us in our own moodiness. When we are sad, she soothes us; when we are happy, she gladdens us; when we would be silent, she 'is still as death; and when we would speak, she is the echo of our sentiments!'

'And,' said Lefevre, 'how simple, how cheap, how accessible, are her pleasures! Those who desire them, have them, without money and without price: and those who have a taste for them never want society. As Prince Eugene is said to have eminently esteemed a friend, who first taught him the value of a moral maxim, so I would reckon those among my benefactors, who have given me a relish for nature.'

'Would that, as these pleasures are open to all, so they were universally enjoyed!' observed Douglas; 'but how many persons there are, who have no rational delight in nature. They little know what a source of pleasure—what a preventative of temptation, they are neglect-

ing!—But, tell me, who do you reckon the benefactors to whom you have referred?

'Principally, perhaps, I am indebted to Hervey, to Beattie, to Goldsmith, to Cowper, to Thomson, to Addison, and to some writers on Natural History, and of Voyages and Travels; and, if I speak as I feel, I shall not omit a reference to yourself. Yes, you must allow me to say, that, whatever was my love of nature, previously, it has been greatly improved by our friendship.

'The advantages of our friendship are, I hope, my dear Charles, mutual. To some of the writers you have named, I owe obligations; and, in addition to them, passing by poets, I ought to refer to Adams, Paley, St. Pierre, and the Rev. William Jones. I know not what I owe to these excellent men; and I shall not easily forget the pleasure I had in first reading their principal writings.'

'After all, I am convinced that nature is not to be fully enjoyed without religion. Nature is but the handmaid to devotion; and, where piety is unknown

her offices are but little understood. Men may pursue nature scientifically, to feed their curiosity; and pant for splendid discoveries, as the path to fame; but no one, I believe, ever had a true and exalted relish for her enjoyments, but the child of devotion.

'In my own case,' Douglas continued, 'I remember I always had a partiality for nature. When but a child, the garden was my favorite resort, and the spade and rake my favorite playthings. When a schoolboy, I frequently stole from the noisy playground, to ramble solitarily over the vales and woods of Hornsey and Highgate, admiring all I saw.

'But it was not till I became the subject of religious influence, that I saw nature as she should be seen, and enjoyed her as she is to be enjoyed. It was when I could recognise a present God in all her works; when I saw his wisdom composing the harmonies of nature—his finger directing the movements of nature—and his benevolence making all those movements beneficial to man;—when I saw the sun filled

with his glory—the moon walking in his brightness—the lily clothed with his beauty—the waters held in his hand, and every living thing animated by his life;—when, in a word, I could look round on the whole heavens and earth, and, adopting the divine sentiment of your favorite poet, say, "My Father made them all!" —then it was, that nature first appeared to me most interesting, most sublime! All that was filial and tender—all that was exalted and religious, struggled within me. I felt that religion had united me to the Author of all things; and I surveyed the beauties of nature as a son surveys a paternal inheritance; frequently ascending from the wonders of creation, to the more sublime wonders of our Redemption.'

'Hence it is,' said Lefevre, willing to prolong his friend's remarks, on a theme so delightful to them, 'that those writers have generally been most successful in interesting and elevated descriptions of nature, who have been most imbued with the spirit of religion.'

'As far as I can judge,' resumed

Douglas, 'I think, talent being equal, we may say this has *always* been the case; and from a most obvious reason. We shall always succeed in painting, in proportion as we fully conceive, and enthusiastically admire an object; and the works of nature are not to be properly understood, or admired, but by the devout mind. Hence also it is, that the sacred writers are superior to all others. The finest judges allow, that there is nothing to be compared with some parts of the writings of Moses, of David, of Nahum, and of Isaiah; and it is purely the sublime spirit of devotion, that raises them so far above all other writers, and frequently above themselves. They find God present every where. It is "*of* him, and *through* him, and *to* him, are all things." The universe is his temple; the everlasting hills are his altars; and all animate and inanimate beings are his worshippers. Oh, my dear friend, no object can be great without religion!—no character can rise to sublimity, without devotion! This scene,' continued he, inclining his hand to the objects before him, 'beauti-

ful and enchanting as it is, separate it from religion, and what is it? Refer it to *chance*, and it is a mere *blank*; connect it with the heathen mythology, and it is debased as low as the inventions of the carnal mind can debase it; but, unite it to the one Great Father of all things, and it gathers its character from its Creator, and becomes the reflection of a power, a purity, a goodness, and a majesty unutterable and infinite!'

'Yes,' said Lefevre; 'and your remarks have suggested, that it was *this* made Eden what it was to our original parents. Paradise was not a Paradise to Adam, merely because it was embellished with every charm the hand of Deity could lavish on it; but chiefly because—"*The voice of the Lord God walked in the garden.*"'

'Excellent! my dear Charles; and may we not hope it is precisely for the same reason that we are so rivetted to *this* spot? We are gratified by every thing we see and hear; but are we not principally delighted with this thought, *that God is*

*here?*—that he sees us—that he pities us—that he raises our thoughts to his works, and, through his works, to himself; and invites us to the most hallowed and divine communion? Is it not *this* that bathes our spirits in peace and joy?

Peace and joy, now, not only bathed their spirits, but suffused their countenances; and they were absorbed, for a time, in those 'sweet musings of a heart resting on the bosom of its Creator.'

The silence was first broken by the mellow and plaintive sounds of a flute, which floated on the water from the vicinity of the Priory. Far from being unwelcome, they seemed to revive their meditations, and afford expression to many of their feelings. It ceased. The vibrating melody still breathed in their ear. They insensibly became desirous of preserving it. They sang the following lines:—

*Hymn to Nature.*

Gentle nature, heavenly fair!
O, how sweet thy pleasures are!
In thy presence while I stay,
As a stream, time glides away.

On thy bosom I would rest,
Like the turtle in her nest;
Tasting that sublime repose,
He who slights thee never knows.

Mother! lovely, meek, and mild,
Soothe the passions of thy child!
Line for line, and part for part,
Print thine image on my heart.

Let me in thy beauties trace
Him who lends thee every grace;
Raise me to his splendid throne,
Thy Great Parent, and my own;

When his glories in thee shine,
Then thy face is all divine;
Like a mirror beaming bright
With a soft, celestial light.

Fount of light! I look to Thee!
Smile on nature—smile on me!
Let thy humble suppliant know
Paradise revived below.

The flute once more breathed its soft and touching sounds across the vale. Their hearts responded to its tender harmony. The notes rose and fell—rose again and fell, till the last fluttered on the air, and then died away.

'It is gone!' said Lefevre.

'Yes,' said Douglas: 'an emblem of all earthly pleasures. They are transitory. The last will soon come, and soon pass away.'

'Ah!' said Lefevre, 'this is, perhaps, the *last* time we shall meet on this happy spot; certainly, it is the last for a long time.'

'Well,' resumed Douglas, 'if our pleasures are temporary, let us remember our sorrows are so too. The last sigh—the last conflict—the last pang, shall quickly come and terminate: and then we shall inherit all the felicities which heaven and eternity can afford us.'

The lateness of the hour admonished them. They reluctantly quitted a place where earth and heaven had often seemed to unite; where they had communed, but might never commune again!

## CHAPTER IX.

THE ensuing morning, witnessed the departure of Douglas from Mrs. Lefevre's. As the separation was short, the two following letters may be sufficient to carry forward the history, till they meet again in the metropolis.

*Mr. Lefevre to Mr. Douglas.*

'Yes, my very dear friend, you are gone; and, it is needless for me to say, I deeply regret your absence. This feeling is indeed far from being confined to me; you have, somehow, made to yourself many friends, in a short time. The day after you left, we had two or three invitations to family parties; and, I assure you, there were great lamentations, when it was known you could not unite with us in honoring them.

'I spend my days in the usual way:

the mornings are given to study, the evenings to recreation. But I study with less patience without you; and my walks, although I do enjoy them, are not so delightful as they were. I can say, solitude is sweet; but, like the Frenchman, I wish to have a friend to whom I can say, *how sweet is solitude!* However, I feed upon the *past.* The retreats about this, my native town, are rendered sacred to memory, by our recent enjoyments. Never before did I know so much of the sweetness of friendship, or the excellence of religion; and, whatever may be the events of my life, never shall I be more entirely happy. The very thought of it gives me happiness! What do I owe to my friend! What to that Providence, which brought us together!

'On Sunday I heard Dr. Mills. I had not many expectations, but how was I surprised and delighted! He is a real orator; quite an example of the eloquence of which we have been lately saying so much. No gingling antitheses--no unmeaning epithets—no periods set to music—no meretricious ornaments—no tricks to

catch admiration and applause. On the contrary, there was, occasionally, something in his manner, that a fastidious critic would have called awkward; and, sometimes in his style, there was a degree of carelessness that involved a sentence in some obscurity; but this seemed to carry forward the great effect of the discourse, as it convinced the hearers, that he was intent on higher objects. His gestures were the most natural; dictated from present feeling, and not from studied attitudes. His language was plain and simple, such as seems at every one's command, but which, after all, few can employ: and, if images were introduced, they evidently arose to illustrate and enforce the subject, and were not called up to assert the capacity of the speaker.

But Dr. Mills' *forte* is in the pathetic. He appears convinced, that sermons, addressed, as they generally are, to people who know more than they practice, should incline rather to exhortation, than argument; and he possesses, in a remarkable degree, that insinuating, affectionate ear-

nestness, which the French call *onction.*

'When he first announces his subject, there is nothing to observe, except, that every thing about him seems to say, "he is in earnest." He gathers warmth and energy as he proceeds; and the prevailing sentiment of his heart evidently is—"If so be I may save myself and them that hear me.!"

'I shall never forget the close of his sermon, on sabbath morning.—He had been treating of the excellencies of the Saviour; and was addressing those who neglected them. Piety, anxiety, benevolence, rose to their fullest exercise, and his manner and language were most powerfully vehement. Now, he entreated like the tenderest of parents; then, he proclaimed the forgiving mercy of the Redeemer, with the authority of an apostle; and again, with trembling, he foretold, like a prophet, the unavoidable miseries of impenitence. He forgot himself, and his hearers forgot him. His style, his manner, his sentiments, were wonderfully eloquent and grand. They influenced all; but no one dwelt

upon them. Nothing filled the soul of the preacher, but the immortal interests of his people, and he had succeeded in fixing their attention on the same object.

'As he was about to sit down, he paused; looked compassionately on his congregation, and said, "I have now fulfilled my commission. I have contrasted the world you have idolized, with the Saviour you have neglected. Say, my dear hearers, which will you serve? *I* will not receive your reply. The Saviour himself is in this place!—Answer as in *his presence!*—Do you hesitate?—Hesitate to prefer bliss to sorrow—honor to disgrace—heaven to earth—heaven to hell!—Oh! to hesitate, is to yield to the tempter of your souls—to hesitate, is to defer your safety to a moment that may never, never be your's!—Yesterday is not your's. It is gone; and has recorded your transgressions before God!—To-morrow is not your's—it may never come to you. *This* moment alone is your's; and the very moment in which you should cast yourself on the mercy of the all-merciful Redeemer."

"O, say not," he continued, "I am too

ardent on this subject. Because you are too insensible to your salvation, blame not those who cannot imitate your indifference. I have a deep stake in your highest interest! I trust I can lay my hand on my conscience and say, I am clear of your blood; but this—this is not enough! I aspire not only to escape being accessary to your ruin—I pant to be the instrument of your redemption! You are part of the charge which the hand of Providence has committed to my care; and, when "I pen my fold for immortality," how can I bear to find you wanting? I have prayed for you—and watched for you—and "travailed in birth till Christ be formed within you the hope of glory;" and how—O! how can I endure to subscribe to the sentence of your condemnation, and see you sink into hopeless, endless, unutterable wretchedness!—God Almighty, in his infinite mercy, avert from us such tremendous evils! and grant, that through His dear Son, we may *all* finally partake of that blessed salvation which we all so eminently need—which we have all so criminally abused!"

'He sat down. A solemn silence testified the feelings of the assembly,—several were moved to tears. I trembled on my seat. But you should have seen and heard him to judge. I have not done him justice.

'I was greatly astonished, however, to find, that few of his regular attendants had power to appreciate the merits of their Pastor. They were all, indeed, strongly attached to him and his ministry; and would, perhaps, have refused to change it for any other. They admired his piety, and felt him to be "a warm-hearted, useful preacher;" but they did not seem to think, that he had any great pretensions to *eloquence*. Eloquence they imagined was the art of *fine speaking*—of loading every sentence with gaudy epithets and inflated terms; sustained by a delivery the most precise and studied.

'At least, I suppose this is the general opinion, from the remarks of Mr. Jones, whom I met last evening. We were speaking of Dr. Mills, and I expressed warm admiration of his sermon.

"Yes," said Jones, "the sermon was excellent, and produced a great effect, but I can hardly agree with you in calling it *eloquent*. Dr. Mills is no *orator*." 'No orator,' said I, 'pray what is an orator?' "An orator -- an orator," said he, "is a good speaker," looking disconcerted as though he wished for a better answer. 'There we are agreed,' I replied, 'and is not Dr. Mills a good speaker?' "In one sense perhaps he is," returned Jones; "but I think not in the *higher sense*. His language is not so beautiful and figurative as our best speakers—it is too familiar. Then, his manner is not studied and graceful—he is *carried away by his subject* and *totally forgets himself*." This was spoken with so much self-satisfaction, that I waived reply; and soon after found, that H—. and G—. and K—. were the standard of this young gentleman's taste.

'But I have written more than I designed, and dinner is announced. On the foot of this, I send you a few verses, in which I have referred to some sources of the pleasure attending this visit. Judge

it candidly; I am not so intimate with the Muses as yourself. Mother sends her kindest regards, while the tear starts in her eye. Nurse Graham blesses you every day and every night; and "sweet are the blessings of the poor." I hope to see you before the end of next week. Till then and ever, I commend you to the care of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Farewell!

'Your's, in inviolable friendship,

'CHARLES LEFEVRE.'

'P. S. Give my best regards to Mr. and Mrs. Russell, and say when I expect to return. If any letters have arrived for me, be so kind as to open them, and let me know the contents.'

*Simple Pleasures Commemorated.*

How pleasant the sight and the fragrance of groves,
Array'd in the blossoms of June and July;
When the minstrels of nature delightedly rove,
Beneath the arcade of a clear summer sky.

How grateful, at noon, in the shade of a tree,
Which spreads within view of a cool looking alley,
To catch the soft zephyrs which playfully flee,
And list to the streamlet that purls in the valley.

And, O, I have lov'd, in a forest remote,
To mark the tall cedar, benignantly bending,
And trailing its branches, while trees of less note,
The pine and the poplar, delight in ascending.

And sweet from the cot are the sounds of delight,
Which float on the breezes from infantile voices,
While the eye of the parent rests pleas'd on the sight,
Till every fond passion within him rejoices.

Then, O, how entrancing the church going bells,
Which seem from each earthly engagement to sever;
And solemn to me is the curfew which tells,
That time is departing—departing for ever.

How oft have I paus'd in the stillness of eve,
To read the lone tombs where our ancestors slumber;
And prayed for composure when I shall receive,
My summons to add to their desolate number.

Sweet scenes of endearment, fond joys of my youth,
When life is declining, and all things depart,
I still may rejoice in this innocent truth,
That pleasures so simple were dear to my heart!

*Mr. Douglas to Mr. Lefevre.*

'*London*, ———

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND.

'On leaving you I made the best of my way, as I designed, to my worthy friends at Bridlington, and after resting a day with them, departed in a sloop of their's for London. The weather was fine. The elements strove to set off each other's glories. I should have greatly enjoyed the sail, had I not been slightly indisposed. As it was, I became desirous of placing my feet on dry land. My patience, however, was to be exercised; for it was not till I had endured a fast, almost as long as the longest of the Mahomedan, that my desire was gratified.

'On reaching home the sight of your letter was most agreeable. Lying on the table as it did, it seemed to break the solitude of the room, and give me the welcome of a friend. I am glad my absence gives you some regrets, as it qualifies you to sympathize with *somebody else's* feelings. May we never part without pain—never meet without joy!

'What a blessing is friendship! It is admirably styled, "the medicine of life;" but let us recollect, it is religion that gives it its most soothing and exhilirating powers. It is this that effectually links heart to heart, and holds our spirits in free communion while we are enduring separation. And how does the sense of distance and séparation die away, when we meet at the feet of one heavenly Father; pour our common complaints into the same bosom; and seek comfort from the smile of the same divine countenance!

'Addison, I think, eulogizes the delicate and refined friendship of two lovers, who, during separation, agreed to gaze, at certain hours, on the moon, that they might indulge their tender affections in thinking that, at the same time, they were looking at the same object. This is all very well; but what is it, compared to that more delicate and sublime friendship, which is cherished and strengthened by the remembrance that, in our utmost separations, we can hold fellowship at the throne of mercy, and commit each other to the pro-

tection of the same eternal power and goodness!

'But the highest charm religion gives to friendship is derived from *immortality*. The union she forms lasts for ever. It is superior to the versatility of circumstance; the stroke of death, and the rottenness of the grave. On earth, this union is incomplete, through the asperities and infirmities which are found in the noblest characters; but in the heavenly state it shall be finished; for every opposing frailty shall be removed. Benevolence shall answer to benevolence; fidelity, to fidelity; and love, to love. We shall see as with one eye; feel as with one heart; and be animated as by one spirit. "We shall know as we are known!" O, what is friendship without this prospect! Who would choose a friendship temporary and perishing, uncertain as the breath in one's nostrils? I would not. Such a friendship has no sympathies, no capacities for me. I am an immortal being. My anxieties, my hopes, my pleasures are, more or less, connected with immortality. Give me,

then, an *immortal* friendship, or give me none!

'Thanks for your *eloquent* account of Dr. Mills's eloquence. He is a man quite to my heart's delight. Would that every church possessed such a one! It is by such men, and by such men almost exclusively, that the word of God must finally prevail.

'I need not say I wish it had been my privilege to have heard him. I have long thought, that no object in the whole earth is half so grand and interesting as a minister of the gospel, who, careless of his own fame, with a heart full of sacred jealousy for the honour of his Saviour; and a countenance beaming with tender benevolence for his hearers, pours forth, from an overflowing soul, the words of eternal life. On the contrary, I know of nothing more contemptible, or monstrous, than a man who, professing to plead for the authority and honours of Almighty God in a rebellious world, is, in reality, courting applause, and offering incense to the vanity of his depraved heart! And, as far as

eloquence is concerned, the advantage lies just where we wish to find it. The one must be eloquent; the other never can. He may figure, and dazzle, and be very rhetorical and majestic; and he may raise to his talents the extolling applause of the multitude; but nothing can be farther from true eloquence. Eloquence is the language of the heart; eloquence carries the mind from the speaker to the *subject;* eloquence raises us from words to things. The man who is false to his subject, *cannot* produce this effect; nor does he *wish* it. He would deprecate a mode of thinking and speaking, that should teach his hearers to *forget him* in the greatness of his subject. How can that paltry being be expected to rise to the grandeur of real eloquence, who is wooing a smile, rounding a period, or deciding on a gesture, when the whole soul should be absorbed by the sublime object of saving an immortal spirit from destruction?

'I am not, however, greatly surprised at the bad taste of your townsmen. A false taste is natural to us, and only

yields to cultivation. The human mind too often despises the simplicity of real oratory, and applauds the mysterious and flowery pomp of that which is false; like the silly child, which carelessly tramples down the corn, in its eager admiration of the poppy.

'I beseech your tenderness towards Mr. Jones. He will *grow*. There is a time of life when we all admire what he now admires, We are a little older, and therefore we think a little differently. If this does not account for all the difference, perhaps, most of the remainder may be ascribed to the reading of Fenelon. We know not how much we are obliged to that chaste and eloquent writer.

'I am much pleased with the verses you have written; and think, if you will condescend to court the Muses, they will be very gracious towards you. I have not suffered the pleasures we enjoyed, to pass without commemoration; you shall judge of the attempt when we meet.

'Mr. and Mrs. Russell are anxiously looking for the return of their "dear

Charles." You seem now to be necessary to their family circle. Remember me to nurse Graham, &c. &c. To your excellent mother I tender my, best regards. Expecting your arrival,

'I am, my very dear Friend,

'Your's most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

## CHAPTER X.

THE changes of life are admirably denominated, by the sacred writers, *trials*. They are designed to try our characters; and bring to the proof their strength and excellence. The energies and weaknesses of our nature often lie concealed in the depths of the heart, even from the eye of the possessor, till they are brought to light by the shifting events of Providence. Moses objected to his appointment as the legislator and guide of Israel, from a sense of his utter unsuitableness, and, yet, in the experiment, he appears most highly gifted for the duties assigned him. Hazael, vexed with a prediction of his own baseness, indignantly exclaims, 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?' and, yet, he lived to accomplish the detested prophecy. How much are we indebted to divine providence, when the circumstances of life are so arranged, as to nourish what is good

within us, and to restrain and consume what is evil!

At the appointed time our young friends hastened to greet each other in London. They renewed, with mutual and growing delight, their accustomed pursuits and pleasures. They continued in these exercises, without disturbance, for nearly two years; but, as they have been sufficiently noticed for the reader's general information, we shall pass over a period, which, though it is recorded in memory as one of the most interesting and profitable, might be considered tame in narration.

About the close of this period, circumstances arose, which materially interrupted the intercourse, and broke the co-operation of Douglas and Lefevre, in plans of personal improvement, and pious benevolence. Duty called Mr. Douglas from the capital; and, as in future, he will pass many months of each year in distant parts of the three kingdoms, he must be regarded rather as its visitor, than its resident. This change will considerably vary the complexion of

our history. The name of Douglas will not be so necessary to illustrate the life of Lefevre, and it will, therefore, not so frequently occur.

The prospect of separation was to Lefevre peculiarly painful. On his first acquaintance with Douglas, he had a love of literature, and a desire of improvement; but his reading was desultory, and his habits irregular, arising from a certain restlessness of temper, which fostered a love of change. These little defects, common to the most engaging youthful characters, had found a valuable corrective in the friendship of Douglas. His habits, his attainments, and even his religious engagements, seemed grafted on this friendship; and it distressed him exceedingly to endeavour to think of them apart.

'Ah!' said he, as he was riding a few miles with his friend, on his departure from town, 'I cannot tell you how I dread this separation. I am afraid I shall quarrel with all our favourite pursuits.'

'The separation, my dear Charles, is painful; but let us not, by our wilful-

ness, render it injurious. Remember we must pursue an object that is really good, for its *own sake*, independent of contingencies, prosperous or adverse. If we suffer ourselves to be ruled by circumstance, woe to our virtue and our peace. We are like the vessel without rudder or sail—the sport of every wind and wave. Besides, the exquisite pleasure we have had in our different pursuits, will be sufficient to determine your future course.'

'I don't know,' rejoined Lefevre. 'Whatever pleasure may arise from my solitary exercises, it cannot equal what I have realized in union with you; and, therefore, the very comparison may be discouraging.'

'But,' said Douglas, with a smile, 'you speak as though you were pronouncing an epitaph over a *deceased* friendship. Our friendship is not expired, nor expiring. It is neither the slave of circumstance nor death. And, even our intercourse will, I trust, suffer little interruption. We shall yet have many and long opportunities of meeting; and, when apart,

a regular exchange of letters may still procure a community of studies and enjoyments.'

Lefevre's countenance brightened on his friend. They journeyed on, adjusting the plan of correspondence, till they came to Hounslow, where the bitter words of separation were to be uttered. They wrung each other's hands, and parted. 'Farewell!' said Lefevre.

'Farewell, my dear Charles!' said Douglas; and then, looking with softened affection, added, 'Beware of Wallis!'

The name of Wallis, though strange to the reader, was familiar to the ear of Lefevre.

This young man was established in the same office with him, though in a different department; and was his superior in years. In addition to the rewards attending this situation, he possessed, by the death of his father, considerable property, which did not fail to give him some importance in the eye of his associates, and more in his own estimation.

Wallis was master of some common-

place reading, and flattered himself on his knowledge of mankind; but, in fact, he had only attained that degree of knowledge which Pope calls "dangerous and intoxicating." At one time, it betrayed him to absurdity; and, at another, reduced him to scepticism. On the subject of religion he professed the utmost liberality; this, however, was a misnomer —it was rather the *utmost indifference.* Had he been asked his creed, he would have declared it to be the Christian; yet he was no more under its influence than that of the Koran or Shaster. Notwithstanding, he was usually found in church on some part of the Sabbath; but it was from the same reason that he was sometimes found in the gallery of the House of Commons; not to worship his Maker and Benefactor, but to be entertained by the eloquence of a popular speaker. He proposed no noble object to himself in existence. Pleasure was evidently his congenial element; and business was pursued only as it was necessary to its enjoyment.

With all these deductions, Wallis was

a fascinating young man. He was sprightly in his conversation—gracious in his manners—and discovered (if not that high excellence, good temper) a great degree of *good humour;* a quality for which it is too frequently mistaken. He denounced every thing mean and hypocritical; and wore an uncommon air of openness and generosity. If he did not know much, he had the knack of *showing off* what he did know to the best advantage; and if his acquaintance with human nature was superficial, it was sufficient to apprize him, that the readiest way to secure the good opinion of others, is, *to* flatter them into a good opinion of themselves. To this practice he had often stooped when he had an end to answer, and it was generally successful; for, alas! few are superior to flattery.

Wallis professed, and indeed discovered, much attachment for Lefevre. It was he, principally, who had, at a former period, succeeded in drawing him into the evils of pleasure. He referred his recent shyness to the greater influence of Doug-

las over him, and he was piqued at it. He had made several efforts to reclaim the friendship of Lefevre; and Douglas judged, on hearing of their separation, he would renew them with greater vigour. He knew too, that Lefevre had a partiality for Wallis, which blinded him to some of his faults, and betrayed him into an undue estimation of his character. Lefevre had acknowledged the injurious effect of their former intimacy; and Douglas spoke from the fulness of his heart, when the caution we have recorded fell from his lips.

Lefevre, on returning to the duties of life, and the employments of the study, soon recovered the tone of his mind; and found that, even in the absence of a friend, good books and a good conscience are no despicable companions. 'Yes,' said he to himself, after reading aloud, with peculiar relish Beattie's "Minstrel," 'here I am happy. I enjoy the society of the wisest, the best of men—attended with the approbation of my own heart. I will never relinquish these pure, exhilirating plea-

sures. What others are there like them? The pleasures of the world may form a *contrast* to them, but never a *comparison.*'

His hours of relaxation were, as usual, passed with Mr. and Mrs. Russell; and he evinced his interest in their comfort by a number of slight attentions, which greatly endeared him to them.

After the lapse of a few weeks, Lefevre received a visit from Wallis. He entered the room with a gay smile on his countenance; and, having exchanged salutations with Lefevre, seated himself.

'Well,' said he, looking at the books on the table, 'always amongst the books. I like to see the world as it goes—but every man to his taste. You like to look at things through spectacles, and I wish to avoid the illusions of optical glasses; there lies the difference.'

'And perhaps,' replied Lefevre, with a bow and a smile, 'the difference may be in my favour. If we admit that our own sight is not quite perfect, as I fear we must, then, you know, glasses are necessary, as a *corrective.*'

'Very smart, my dear Lefevre, upon my word! You were always a wit, and I am glad these books hav'n't spoiled you. But tell me, how is it you never come to see us? You know both Jane and myself are happy to have your company.'

'My thanks to you and your sister. But why should you charge me with never seeing you? I called not a month since.'

'Ha, *called*—but you don't spend a cheerful evening as you used to do. I hope we have no reason to repent of those evenings.' Lefevre sighed. 'Well,' continued he, 'I suppose I have to blame Mr. Douglas for robbing me of a friend. He is a crafty fellow—he knows how to hold a friend—and he's a lucky fellow to meet with such a friend as *you*.'

'Wallis!' exclaimed Lefevre, with a look of displeasure, 'this from you. Am I to hear my friend called crafty and selfish to my face? Am I—

'Stop!—excuse me,'—cried Wallis smiling; 'I assure you I meant no personal reflection on Mr. Douglas. I merely charged him with what is common

to the *species*. He is man, and therefore he is selfish. Trust me, man must submit to one common declension wherever he is found—in dear England or savage Barbary. It is

Nominative ······Ego, *I*,
Genitive ·······Mei, *of me*,
Dative ·········Mihi, *to me*,
Accusative·····Me, *me*,
Vocative ·······*not wanting*,
Ablative ·······Me, *with*, *from*, and *by me*, all the world over.—You look incredulous; but I can bring down authorities from your own shelves upon you in fine style. What have you to say against Pope and Rochefoucault, pray?'

'I simply say, I do not believe their theories. Selfishness is indeed prevalent, but not universal—there are exceptions.'

'O yes,' rejoined Wallis, playfully, 'and every man makes himself an exception—and, if he has a dear chum, he makes him an exception—and so selfishness is banished out of the whole wide world twice over!—But,' added he assumingly, 'you should see the world, Charles,

—you should see the world,—you don't know it—indeed you don't. Remember that fine line of my friend Mr. Pope—

' The proper study of mankind is man."

' I do remember it—and I think no study to man can be more important and engaging than that of human nature, but,'—

' Well, well, let us waive it,' interrupted Wallis.—' I hav'n't yet told you the business of my visit, and I know you'll approve of that, without any of these tiresome *buts*.—You must know then, that a few of us have had a meeting at my house, about petitioning our superiors for a rise of salary. We are to meet again, and we want you to meet with us, and assist us with your talents.—Come, come,—don't look grave,—we must have your help—we sha'n't get on without you. I don't care a straw about it for myself, but it's wretched to hear of the distresses of some poor fellows in the office.'

If Lefevre looked grave, as Wallis imagined, it was not because he was preparing objections to the proposal, for he fully approved of it. He had a conviction,

'that the rewards of the office were not proportioned to the duties. He knew that many young men, who had married, were overtaken by debts in spite of their best economy, and were frequently harassed by arrests and imprisonment; and that others, who to escape these evils remained single, too often fell a sacrifice to the worst of temptations. He considered the object as one of benevolence and morality.—His generosity was touched by the *avowed* generosity of Wallis; and he quickly satisfied him by a promise to attend the next meeting.

When Wallis left his apartment, Lefevre, reviewed his conduct, as though he feared he had committed himself by too hasty a promise. An anxiety hovered on his spirits, at having engaged to enter society which had formerly been so dangerous. 'But,' thought he, 'the object is excellent, and we *must* meet to accomplish it;' and, as to the dangers, I hope I am wiser than I was.'

On the evening of the following day, he met the party to tea at Wallis's.—

Amongst others, there were present two or three of very dissipated habits; and he was surprised to find these more clamorous in their complaints, than others who were real and involuntary sufferers. His heart shrunk from coming so immediately into contact with these young men he had carefully shunned: but he directly recurred to the *object.*

The whole party received him with the greatest respect. They really admired him for his skill in business;—they knew that they required his energy and talents to assist them in procuring their wishes;—and they were aware that his name was of importance, as his diligence and fidelity had commended him to the favor of his employers. Accordingly every countenance wore a smile, and every tongue uttered a flattering compliment. Lefevre's opinion on every question was taken with evident deference. Lefevre was voted as secretary.—Lefevre was requested to draw up a memorial—for *they were sure no one could do it so well.* At length, the meeting adjourned, having nominated a committee,

and agreed to meet together, once a week or oftener, at a chop-house in the city.

Events that have been anticipated with fear, if they yield pleasure, do so in a very high degree. Lefevre thought he had never attended a more pleasant meeting. The generous benevolence of his heart doubtless contributed to this impression; and, if gratified vanity had its share, let him cast the first stone, who, in the same circumstances, would have been totally free from its influence.

The moment in which passion is gratified is always dangerous. It demands indulgence on indulgence; and seldom is the calm remonstrance of reason heeded, till the time for listening to it is past. As the little meeting was breaking up, Wallis whispered three or four of his favorites to stay, as they were to have a concert that evening, He passed to Lefevre, who stood with his hat in his hand, ready to take leave. 'Charles you wo'n't go yet—stay a bit—you'll speak to Jane?'

'Certainly I will. I did not know she was at home;' and immediately he made his way to the drawing room.

The drawing room, to Lefevre's surprise, was brilliantly lighted, and its ornaments so nicely bestowed, as to indicate the expectation of company. Miss Wallis was seated by a little table, with a couple of books before her. Her well formed person was elegantly robed in white; and, though professing to read, it was evident her attention was not so absorbed, as to forget the grace of attitude. She received Lefevre with one of her best smiles.

'What have you here?' said Lefevre, taking up the spare book.

'A tale—have you read it?'

'No.—I don't read novels.'

'Not any?—Is it possible!'

'Quite possible, I assure you—— I don't think them worth attention.'

'Well, I didn't think you were so prejudiced. You condemn a set of the most amusing and worthy authors without a hearing. At least, you should read them before you condemn them. Now just say you will read this tale; and then I'm sure you will change your opinion.'

'Excuse me—I have no wish to read it!'

'Well,' said she smiling, 'the boy shall leave it for you, and then you may do as you like.—I am convinced you will approve of it.'

Wallis and his companions now entered. Lefevre rose to depart,—'You are about to receive company,' said he to Wallis, 'I was not aware of it.'

'O, it's nobody—nobody. It's only a little music party of my sister's.—I didn't know of it when I appointed this night for our meeting; but it doesn't signify, we shall have some of Handel's best pieces—and you're fond of music Charles—come, you can stay?'

Lefevre was fond of music. He and his friend Douglas had been accustomed to seek relief from other pursuits in its soothing harmonies. His heart, too, was in good humour with himself and his company, and he resumed his seat.

This easy compliance was scarcely expected by Wallis. He could have wished they had no party for the evening, as

he feared, by asking too much of Lefevre, he might gain nothing. He was, therefore, particularly pleased with Lefevre's submission, and, with animated gaiety, he led forward the conversation till their company arrived.

The number of the expected guests was at length perfected, and the concert began. The various powers of the organ, the piano, the violin, and the flute, were put in requisition, relieved by several good voices skilfully managed. Some of the finest parts of the "Messiah" were selected, and the performance was, at least not disgraceful, to the divine composition. Lefevre, who was more an *amateur* than a *connoisseur*, contented himself with standing behind Miss Wallis's chair, keeping the time of the music with his fingers. As it proceeded, however, he was fixed in deep attention; and when it rose in all the combination of sound, to the utmost grandeur, and, then, with fluctuating melody, descended, till nothing met the ear, but one soft note trembling on the treble voice of a female, his heart paused within him—he was filled with the most captivating ecstacies!

The refreshments went round, and the performance was renewed with some variation in the subjects. Each one was willing to name something in which he flattered himself he excelled. Duets, sonatas, concertos, overtures, voluntaries, and a few favorite songs, were accordingly introduced. Lefevre continued to participate in the general delight. That feeling of devotion, which he thought had animated his enthusiasm, was indeed gone; but still the music was most enchanting, and the execution more exquisite, as if the performers were now more at home. The songs too, if he had rather they should have been passed over, contained nothing *very objectionable.*

It was not to be expected that these exercises could be continued without thirst and exhaustion; and these were temptations to recur to the wine and sweetmeats with which the sideboard was richly provided. No one had drank enough to subdue reason; but each one had, probably, taken enough to produce those *false spirits* which raise the mind above sobriety.

Lefevre expected they were about to separate, when it was proposed to terminate the evening with a dance! The proposal was no sooner made than accepted. The room was immediately cleared—the violins struck up, and several couple were instantly floating round the floor.

Lefevre threw himself into a chair, satisfied that he was allowed to be a spectator; and Wallis, fearing this step should give him vexation, took a chair by his side. This little attention dispelled his chagrin. He talked and laughed with his companion, vibrating alternately his foot and head to the exhilirating music. Miss Wallis had relinquished her partner, and presented her hand to Lefevre! He did not expect this—and was not prepared for it. What could he do?—He must accept it, and, therefore, he would do it courteously. Wallis, too, led on a partner, and the dance became general. All was now meriment and hilarity. The whole scene swam before their inflamed senses, till sight became dizzy, and their very pleasures were rendered uncertain, dreamy, and delirious.

Near the hour of midnight, the giddy party broke up, exhausted in every power. The cool air of night restored Lefevre to that consciousness of which wine, and laughter, and noise, and polluted air, had nearly deprived him. 'What have I been doing?' said he to himself, as he walked the deserted street. 'Where have I been?—I have been led away by pleasures I condemn—but they are not *guilty* pleasures.—Music is innocent—and dancing?—Well, I could not avoid that—and, is there any harm in it?' He was not prepared, at this moment, to remember, that things innocent in themselves are often made dangerous by their accompaniments.

He arrived at his home, and hastened to his chamber. Rather from the impulse of habit than of desire, he bent his knees on the usual spot for his nightly devotion. *He could not pray!* He attempted to utter himself, but his thoughts were distracted, and his tongue faultered. The sounds of the violin were still in his ear—the objects he had just seen were still reeling before his eyes. His frame was fit for any thing,

rather than the calmness of devotion. He sighed heavily, and, with self reproaches, threw himself on his bed. He lay wakeful and restless till the dawn of day, and then fell into dreamy and comfortless slumbers. Once more he thought he grew giddy in the mazes of the dance—once more he thought his pulse quickened at the familiar touch of woman—and then, again, he awoke feverish and unrefreshed.

## CHAPTER XI.

OUR judgment of an action *before* and *after* its performance is widely different. In one case we frequently pronounce impartially, as on a matter in which we are not implicated; in the other, we are an interested party, and self-love will place the action in such favourable lights as to induce us, if not to justify, yet to extenuate, its improprieties.

Lefevre employed the first leisure moments of the day coolly to review his conduct on the past night. He was inclined to see his error, and yet, in spite of this inclination, his heart succeeded in its palliation. 'It is true,' said he, 'I sang—but I did not join in the parts that were amorous and foolish. I danced—but that was unavoidable, in my circumstances. I drank rather more wine than is usual to me—but then I was not aware of the quantity, and my senses were not af—fected—

were not *perverted.* At least, these pleasures are not the element of religion—I have lost my relish for devotion; and they are not the way to happiness—I never felt more unhappy. I will partake of them no more!—and, as to wine, I will adopt Douglas's rule—never to take more than two glasses; and then I shall not drink unawares.'

Satisfied with himself at making these resolutions, the gloom vanished from his countenance; and concluding that they would effectually preserve him from future dangers, he allowed himself to think of visiting at Wallis's, "*when he was certain there were no parties.*"

Miss Wallis had, perhaps, as much to do with this desire as her brother. She was sensible, and of pleasing manners. Lefevre thought she had been attentive to him, and he had never before set such value on her attentions. He did not encourage any serious desires concerning her, and he abhorred the thought of trifling with the feelings of a young woman; but yet he felt that vague inclination to her society, by

which engaging young persons, of the contrary sexes, are so often attracted; and which, though innocent in itself, is dangerous in its tendencies.

While Lefevre, with self-complacency, was deciding how far he might, and might not go on ground that had better been abandoned altogether, he received the following letter from his friend Douglas.

'*Caernarvon.*

'MY VERY DEAR CHARLES,

'Your last I received at Aberystwith, after a few days delay. It was well we took the precaution of giving a double reference in the direction, was it not?—otherwise I could not have had it.

'I am glad you are reconciled to your accustomed studies, and that they continue to reward you. Although subject to many interruptions, I do not lose sight of the duty of self-improvement, in the highest sense of the term. I find my pleasures in it; and they are heightened by a knowledge that we are similarly em-

ployed. Pleasures are only such as they challenge the approbation of conscience; and a good conscience will not approve what is not beneficial either to ourselves or others. May we ever find the flowers of pleasure in the field of duty, and then we may gather them all the day long!

'The place from which this is dated will apprize you, that I am in the midst of all that is great and wonderful in North Wales. We have often attempted to imagine the beauties of Scotland and Wales; but all our imaginings have been feebleness indeed, compared with the realities. Tremendous precipices, and smiling lakes; awful mountains, and lovely valleys; deep ravines, and woody glens; babbling streams, and roaring, dashing cataracts; all that is grand on earth, adorned with all that is glorious in the heavens!

'But this is only like telling you, that one of Gainsborough's finest pictures is composed of trees and brooks, of hills and vales, of cottages and clouds. It is the *combination* produces the effect; and I despair of giving you this. The most

magnificent scene I have beheld, is, I think, from Wind-Cliff, near Chepstow; the most sublime is from the summit of Snowdon; the most beautiful, the vales of Festiniog and Llangollen; the most picturesque, Lloyd's Pulpit. The prevailing characters of the scenery are the grand and romantic.

'I cannot possibly tell you what I have enjoyed amidst such charms. Rousseau says somewhere, it is possible to live a thousand years in a quarter of an hour. If this is possible, I think I may put in some claim to it. How have I wept and smiled! How have I been fixed in pensive enjoyment, as though held by the hand of enchantment!

'As to speeches, I made none; so I have none to record. I never, in my life, made less use of my tongue. It seems to lie dormant, as if sensible it was not formed to express the feelings congenial with such objects.

'This, too, must supply me with an apology for not sending the Sonnets you expect. Surrounded by every thing to

fill one with the enthusiasm of poetry, I never felt less disposition to *make lines;* and I am inclined to think the mind that, under the first full impression of such scenery, can turn its attention to adjust the quantity and rhythmus of words, has as much real taste as that celebrated party who, in ascending the Egyptian pyramid, strove which should be at the top first, and when there, sat themselves down to carve their names on its stones! However, before the freshness of the impression passes off, something may be done a little to your wishes.

'Whilst I thus allude to enjoyments, I hope it is not of these alone that I can speak. I would believe that they have been profitable in their influence. An enthusiastic writer has said, "that it is impossible to ascend Snowdon without coming down a better man." If this were true, government should make every felon in the kingdom go on pilgrimage to this purifying spot. But, without exaggeration, it is certain that great objects have a tendency to enlarge the mind. Every base, every

paltry thought, appears discountenanced in the presence of such awful majesty. All the pomp, all the glitter, all the distinctions of life, are despicable as the playthings of a child, when amidst the sublimities and solitudes of nature, we commune with God and with his works. Never before did I possess such profound reverence for the divine greatness; never before did I so admire or apprehend the condescension and tenderness of the Great Redeemer!

> ' O, may I breathe no longer than I breathe
> My soul in praise to him who gave my soul,
> And all her infinite of prospect fair!'

' But let us turn from things to men, and if you please—to women. I am extremely comfortable in the family of Mr. and Mrs. S—. They give me every attention; and their sons frequently join me in my rambles. There is but one object that disconcerts me, and that is their daughter! She is an only daughter, and a spoiled daughter. She thinks herself pretty; and, in this con-

ceit, idolizes her sweet person. She cannot use her fingers lest they should lose their whiteness—nor her eyes lest they should lose their brightness. She will not go out when it is cloudy, lest it should rain—nor when it is sunny, lest she should be tanned. She studies how she shall sit down, and how she shall rise again; and, moreover, plagues me with her essences, as you know I am of Seneca's opinion, "that of all smells, no smell is the best smell."

'Of course, she can play, and draw, and smile, and sentimentalize; but she has neither good sense, good taste, nor good temper. And even that soft retiring modesty, which rests on the countenance of woman, like the unsullied bloom on the peach, is wanting. This last defect I charge on her familiarity with love tales. I am convinced they effect nothing sooner than to efface that chaste and delicate reserve, which gives loveliness to beauty; and which, if once lost, is not to be wholly recovered. Would that I had the purgation of such young ladies libraries!—that

is of our circulating libraries. I would soon act the part of Don Quixote's friend towards them, and reduce their myriads of volumes to some score or two, I warrant you!

'But what most offends me in this young lady is her treatment of her parents. They are persons of good understanding and simple manners; happy in each other, and most affectionate to their children. In fact they are specimens of the good old English character—a character, that I hope will never be lost to us by French influence, or any other imaginable influence. These worthy persons cannot sympathise with their daughter's fine sentiments. They often express a wise opinion in awkward and ungrammatical language, and habitually study comfort in preference to fashion. These are flagrant evils in her estimation; and she seems to think they exonerate her from that respect, which a child can never withhold from a parent, without forfeiting for herself. It must, however, be allowed, that Miss S— is to be pitied, as

well as censured. Her parents, with the best intentions, have mistaken her education. They were determined their only daughter should have "*the very best education,*" and have run to a great expense in obtaining it. But alas! instead of education, she has been crowded with showy accomplishments, which may expose her to the snares of the worthless, but which can contribute little to make her either useful or happy in domestic life. So far from directing the whole process of instruction to the government of the feelings, the formation of the temper, and the inculcation of religious principles, the plan, one would think, was designed most effectually to pamper and indulge vanity, selfishness, and folly. Indeed, if education imply *discipline*, and is designed principally as a moral corrective of the evil dispositions of the heart, she is absolutely without education.

'I must now suspend my communion with my dear friend. Surely you will not complain of my "short, shabby letters," any more. Come, come, full at every corner, examine how you will.

'Remember me kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Russell, your mother, Mr. F. &c. &c. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you!'

'Your's, most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

'P. S. I hope you see Banks occasionally. I know he has a respect for you, and will value your society.

" *More last words.*"—' What I have said of the S—'s is, of course, in confidence. It is what any one might observe; but we cannot hold the claims of hospitality too sacred.'

This letter, although truly welcome to Lefevre, gave some little disturbance to his complacency. It was the first letter that did not yield unmixed pleasure; and the change of feeling revealed to him something of the truth. He could not help seeing that *some* particulars in the notice of Miss S—, might be applied to Miss Wallis. He was forced too, into a contrast of his recent pleasures with those of Douglas. He felt that he had sunk from the level of equality with his friend: and

almost unconsciously his pride was piqued. 'But,' thought he, 'I shall return to enjoyments worthy of me; and as to Miss Wallis, I have nothing to do with her. She has faults, and I should be glad to amend them,'

At this moment a small parcel was brought to him with Miss Wallis's compliments. It contained the promised Tales. He threw them on the table: 'I will not read them,' said he, thinking of Douglas's sentence against novels. 'And yet,' continued he, recollecting himself, 'Douglas allows that he would spare *some* of them —perhaps this may be one,' opening a volume.—'*Moral Tales!*' 'Surely if they answer the *title* they contain nothing improper.' Then recurring to his engagements as secretary to the petitioning committee, he shut the book—cleared his table—and sat down to consider of his arrangements.

Lefevre soon formed his plans; and, as he never allowed time to be wasted between the forming a purpose and its execution, he was quickly absorbed in their

accomplishment. All the time, at his own command, was devoted to the object; and, when he could not give it his services, it still filled his thoughts. He wrote letters — he made speeches —he drew up petitions — he waited on his superiors, to explain the proposed measures, and to solicit their support. It cost him a sigh to abandon entirely, and at once, his favorite pursuits: 'but,' thought he, 'it is necessary. The more energy I give to it, the sooner I shall return to them; and no object can have more claims upon me.'

Thus he satisfied himself; yet it is probable, that as much might have been done, and with as much effect, and even in as little time, without that feverish anxiety,—that exclusive attention which he indulged. But, Lefevre had strong feelings, which often hurried him on by their impulse, without allowing him to adjust his attention to the merit of the object. If a *new* object interested him at all, it interested him for a time *totally*.

The ardour of his pursuit encreased as he advanced. The warm praises of his

companions—the sense of his own superiority—the agitations of hope and fear, as directed to the issue—may be supposed to have contributed to this. But principally, the generous heart of Lefevre was touched on finding, from more minute enquiry, that the evils they were endeavoring to remove, were much more extensive, than they had imagined. These were chiefly found amongst those young men, who had married; and, who, in preparing for the pleasures of matrimony, had forgotten to provide for the claims of a family. While they had no prospect of redress, delicacy prevented them making a full statement of their condition; but since steps were taking, that promised some relief, they cast aside their restraints. It was painful to hear of sickness, without cordials—of children, without bread—of spirits depressed to the earth, by a weight of debt, which could neither be borne nor thrown off; and this from persons in the prime of life, and, in most cases, anxious to provide honorably for their families.

Lefevre could not hear these accounts

unmoved, nor with a distant and uncertain prospect of assistance. He proposed, that a fund should be opened for the discharge of small debts of married men; and, that relief might be bestowed without a sacrifice of worthy feelings, he proposed it should be styled a *lending fund*, for the advance of money, but which, it was understood, should never be demanded. He could not suffer himself to suggest a generous act to others, without becoming an example of it; he, immediately, therefore, put down his name for a handsome sum, and the subscription became general.

Many of the committee were far from being able to feed on anticipations how pleasant soever; they had long been accustomed to live on the present and passing pleasure. Besides, 'it was impossible to meet at a chophouse without taking something.' That they might not be *shabby*, they united to take a slight supper; and the committee meeting was soon transformed into a beefsteak club.

Lefevre, indeed, protested against this as needless; and, if expected at such a

place, they could easily meet where it would not be necessary. But, in this instance, he did not prevail, and he was a little mortified. 'Well, well,' whispered Wallis, as he was proceeding to remonstrate, 'press it no farther—you shall be at full liberty to act as you like—I should like it as well without, but you know, Charles, we must humour men a little if we would manage them; and, as to supper, why, we must take it *somewhere*.'

Little did Lefevre suspect that Wallis was 'humouring him, in order to manage him.' When he found himself at perfect liberty, he lost his hostile feeling to the supper; and, that he might show he was not so *rigid*, as some supposed, he occasionally partook of it. Once familiarized to it and its society, he no longer objected; and, in a few weeks, the business and the supper were so confounded, that one could not be avoided without the other. So insensibly do we lose the sense of what is proper to our characters!

Some weeks, and even months, elapsed in this employ, without much opportunity

for any thing else. At length, nearly all that could be effected was done by the perseverance of Lefevre, and he found that little more was required of him, than to give his attendance at the weekly meeting.

He now determined to resume his more peaceful pursuits; but alas! the relish for them had subsided. His habits had been interrupted; his mind had been excited by active, bustling, irregular exertions; and it was still filled with anxious expectancy, as to the result of all his toil. It is easy to conceive that, in bringing such a mind to the tranquil pleasures of the study and retirement, all would at first be dull and insipid. He could not translate a page of Virgil, nor read a chapter of the Universal History with his wonted pleasure. He yawned over his books, and was frequently compelled to read a page five or six times, before he could bring his absent and disordered thoughts to bear upon its contents. This was too tiresome to be endured. Instead of resolving, by patient efforts, to recover the taste for those pleasures he had lost, he chafed his spirits

with fruitless regrets. His conscience was 'ill at ease;' he alternately quarrelled with himself and with his studies; and felt disposed to relieve himself from the uneasiness of solitude, by seeking pleasant society.—Thus did he unconsciously add link to link to those chains, in which he was already entangled, when one noble spring of resolution might have burst them asunder.

Lefevre thus disposed, did not long want temptation. Since the renewal of their intercourse, Wallis had shown him great attentions, and his assiduities were rather encreasing than diminishing. He had been pleased to find he had regained his influence over Lefevre; and he was bent on its growth.

It must not, however, be supposed, that he had any design of laying waste the virtues and character of his friend in his endeavours. He had different views of virtue and religion, to Lefevre. 'I shall' thought he 'be doing him good in rubbing off his puritanical austerities.—It's a pity that, as Lefevre can make so pleasant

a companion, he should be duped by the nostrums of Douglas.'

If Wallis found some motive to his attentions in his jealousy of Douglas, he found still more in Lefevre's rank in the Office. Lefevre, he admitted, was 'second only to himself, in importance, every body talked of him—every body praised him. To have the intimate friendship of Lefevre, was the best way to share in his respect and popularity; and, on having this, he was determined. Full of his determination, he accosted him:—' Well, Charles, now we have done what we can for the office, and the bustle's over, let us meet in a more snug and intimate way. What is life without friendship? hey?—we are just made for one another, depend on't—you have a fine generous heart, and I hope I have a little generosity about me.—But one must not vaunt of one's self.—Well, whatever my heart is, it is as you see it—no hypocrisy, that's one comfort!—and it's all your own too.—How could I expect friendship, if I didn't offer it. Heart for heart, Charles—that's the only exchange!

Numbers would gladly have one's heart, but they cannot make the purchase—cannot pay *in kind*—they've no heart—no soul! Well, you have a heart, and a noble one it is—I will make myself worthy of it. And as to our religious opinions, why, we'll think and let think—that's the best philosophy Charles, hey? Consider me then as your own, and with me, of course, all my appurtenances—my horse—my purse—my home; but why should I name them? come and see us.'

If Lefevre felt a little offended at the flippancy of such addresses, the feeling was presently lost in his admiration of their apparent frankness and liberality. Perhaps his admiration was rather misguided in this instance. He should have remembered, that ease and warmth of manner are distinct from frankness; and, as to liberality, he should have known that, if we only conform ourselves to the course of the world, there are few who will trouble themselves about our *idle* opinions. Lefevre, however, was frank and liberal, and judged of others by his own standard.

Lefevre soon honoured the invitation of his friend. When persons sincerely desire to please, pleasure is easily communicated. Wallis was sincere in his desire, and successful in his effort with Lefevre. His sister, too, was not backward in her endeavours. Separate from her desire to act in unison with her brother, she aimed, by a few obliging attentions, to secure those of Lefevre. It was pleasant to be noticed by a young man, who was noticed and admired by so many; and it might be still more pleasant and convenient if, in time, she could prevail on him to accompany her to an amusement, as she frequently lost the tempting opportunity for want of a suitable attendant.

Lefevre was gratified with the visit. It was renewed and renewed, till it became a sort of understanding, that he was to spend two or three evenings at Wallis's every week.

Notwithstanding these arrangements, Lefevre could not always be in society. There were still some hours which he was compelled to spend in retirement, and

they lost nothing of their wearisomeness. What was to be done? He could not meditate—it would rather disturb than promote his peace. He could not read his usual books—a dissipated attention, a dissatisfied conscience, interrupted him. The *Tales* presented themselves. He read some of them. They interested him—they pleased him! "How ridiculous he had been to take up a prejudice against them, whilst ignorant of them!"

From one extreme, as is often the case, he ran to the other. He had concluded, that every thing that bore the name of novel, must be mischievous and immoral; and now he was convinced that novels were, at once, the most instructive and amusing reading imaginable. His conviction was soon known to the Wallis's; and they took care to supply him so cautiously with books, that it was not materially shaken. He quickly ran through them. His appetite encreased in proportion as it was supplied; and, eventually, he became a most determined and indefatigable novel reader.

## CHAPTER XII.

WHILE Wallis was exulting in the hope of reclaiming his friend from melancholy and fanaticism; and while Lefevre was eagerly fleeing from the presence of a conscience which, because it told him the truth, he had foolishly adjudged an enemy; Mr. and Mrs. Russell were filled with most anxious concern.

Lefevre had, indeed, preserved the best appearances before them; but his frankness of character did not allow him to beguile them into a false opinion; and their very attachment to him, whilst it apologized for his failings, was quick in their detection. They did not know enough of his engagements to say exactly how the change was effected; but they were too sensible a material change had occurred since the renewal of his intercourse with Wallis. His calm and regular pursuits, in which he was once so happy, were now

abandoned; he was evidently reluctant to spiritual conversation; and they had reason to fear that, if the forms of devotion were not relinquished, the spirit had departed.

They tendered their little attentions as usual, and even increased them; but, generally, they met no kindly return; and sometimes were succeeded by a tart reply. That cheerfulness of temper which prepared him formerly to receive and bestow happiness in the little circle, was lost; and succeeded by a feverish hurry and irritation of spirit, which spoke of inward dissatisfaction. His evenings were seldom spent at home; and when they were, his refreshments were often taken in silence; and he hastily retired to his room, to forget himself in the engrossing interest of a novel, or romance.

One evening, after Mr. and Mrs. Russell had been dwelling with parental anxiety on Lefevre's declensions, they resolved to bear their trouble where they were accustomed to carry all their troubles, and where they never failed to find relief.

They kneeled down by the side of each other; Mr. Russell, with a patriarchal manner, lifted up his voice to the throne of heavenly grace; while his worthy companion evinced her sympathy in his sentiments, at one time, by a sigh, at another, by a whispered Amen.

It happened that, in the midst of this exercise, Lefevre came home; and, to avoid disturbing it, he took his seat in the adjoining room; where, however, he could not fail to hear every sentence most distinctly. At first, he was surprised that the devotions of the family occurred so much later than the regular hour; but he had not heard many sentences before he concluded, that this was an extra service, and purely on his own account. His heart was agitated with a variety of feelings, and unconsciously he sank on his knees. Mr. Russell proceeded to notice his dangers; to pray for his deliverance; and to strengthen his petitions by an ingenuous avowal of their interest in his welfare, and by an earnest appeal to Divine mercy. His emotion grew as he advanced; and,

in closing, he seemed like Abraham pleading for the cities of the Plain. His fervor, his affection, his easy but reverend access to God in prayer, touched Lefevre even more than the new view it compelled him to take of his situation; and he arose deeply affected, and wiping the starting tears from his eyes.

After having employed a minute in composing himself, he entered the adjoining room, and, stretching out his hand to Mr. Russell, said,—'Thank you, sir!'

'For our prayers, you mean!' said Mr. Russell, taking his hand, and looking a little surprised. 'Then you have heard them, and they have apprized you of our anxieties on your account?'

'They have, sir; and I thank you for them. But I hope there is not so much reason for fear as you apprehend.'

'I hope so too, my dear Charles,' said Mr. Russell, with a complacent smile. 'I know we old folks are tempted to be too jealous of youth; but I know also that youth are seldom sufficiently cautious for themselves. This may be the case with

us. If we should have more anxieties for you than appear reasonable, you must ascribe them to the best motives; and, if you should not be fully aware of your dangers, perhaps you may derive benefit from our caution.'

'I shall be most thankful for your advice, sir; and trust to profit from it.—But, what have I done?—I have done nothing that is wrong, have I?'

'Nothing that is *wrong!*—I hope, my dear Charles, you do not limit this phrase to things directly immoral. This will never do for Christians. I remember my good old minister of Bridgenorth used often to say, there are three sorts of actions:—those that are good; those that are bad; and those that are doubtful;—and that we ought to be most cautious of those that are *doubtful.* "For," said he, (they are his very words), "we are in most danger of these doubtful actions; because they do not alarm us, and yet they insensibly lead to greater transgressions—just as the shades of twilight gradually reconcile us to darkness."'

'But I do not know that I have done even what you would call *doubtful*,' replied Lefevre, in haste, as if he thought conscience would forbid the sentence, if he paused.

'I believe we shall find the best way of deciding on these *things doubtful*, is to judge rather by their *influence* upon us, than by their *sensible turpitude*. And now, my dear Charles, be candid with yourself, as you can be. Look back a little. Compare yourself, not with what you were yesterday, or yesterday week; but compare yourself with what you were six months ago. Are you not different to what you were *then?* Are you so tranquil, so happy, so satisfied with yourself? Have you so much spirituality of mind? so much deadness to the world?—such enjoyment of religion?—And must you not refer this change of feeling to a change of society and employments?'

Lefevre threw himself back in his chair, and rested his eyebrows on the fore-fingers of his right-hand, evidently the subject of an inward conflict, which he yet

wished to conceal. Mr. Russell was delighted to see he had brought him to this state of reflection; and, that it might not be interrupted he paused and began to charge his pipe, a thing he habitually did when he had nothing else to employ him.

Mrs. Russell, however, had held her peace as long as she was able, and she remarked with some warmth—'But surely Mr. Lefevre you cannot think it *doubtful*, whether you ought to read such *scandalous* and *wicked* books as those, which have been lying on your table, for the last two months?'

Lefevre was not displeased at this ill-timed, but well-intentioned observation. It called him from painful, though salutary, reflections; and he felt, that if it did apply to some of the novels that had passed under his eye, it did not describe the whole of them, nor those that had afforded him most pleasure. He therefore answered with spirit,—'That the books in question were not scandalous, and wicked;—that, on the contrary, they were designed to enforce good morals;—that they gave us an

acquaintance with the world, and taught us a proper conduct in life.'

'I don't know,' replied Mrs. Russell, looking rather wisely,—'I believe you must allow, that it is not to novel readers we are to look, for "proper conduct" in the world. These wretched books, I am sure, have ruined multitudes of young people.'

'Well, ma'am, they have not ruined me,' said Lefevre, a little vexed at Mrs. Russell's close remarks, the more so, perhaps, because he felt his conscience inclined to her side.

'Oh! Mr. Lefevre, do not be angry! Do not talk lightly about being ruined. I cannot bear that!—But I cannot help thinking, that novels and plays are the *way* to ruin, and Mr. Russell and I, have not been easy about you, since you brought them into the house.—Say, Mr. Lefevre, you wo'n't read any more of them. Remember, you used to call them "rubbish and vile trash."—Oh! what would Mr. Douglas say if he knew you read them!'

This feeling speech much affected Lefevre; but the appeal to Douglas, with

which it closed, touched his pride; and he again replied,—'That Mr. Douglas would not condemn them as Mrs. Russell did; and, that she had no right to condemn them, since she had never read them. Read them,' said he, with rather an ungracious tone, 'and then give sentence.'

'Nay, my dear Charles,' said Mr. Russell, with his usual calmness, 'I hope you do not think it necessary to buy all our knowledge with experience. Surely you would not think of taking a dose of arsenic, to ascertain that it is poison. And when we see, with our own eyes, the dangerous influence of these books on numbers of young persons; and hear the testimony of the best and most pious of men concerning them; we can need no other evidence, and are fully warranted in forming our own opinion.'

Lefevre was asking himself, why he did not reason in this way at the time Miss Wallis first introduced her Tales to him, when Mr. Russell resumed: 'I tell thee what Charles—I remember my younger days. I thought of many things as you

now seem to think. I attempted to unite religion with, what the world calls, innocent pleasures. But, somehow or other, I found that these *innocent* pleasures hurt my conscience, and unfitted me for devotion. I was in this unhappy state for a long time and it distresses me to think how near I was to losing all taste for religion, by these wordly pleasures. However, that God whom I had sought as the guide of my youth, did not forsake me. I prayed that I might see my error, and read my bible more diligently; and, in a few weeks, I was almost another creature. I was so happy in religion, that I lost all relish for my foolish amusements. So true it is, that prayer will either draw us from the world, or the world will draw us from prayer. It was about this time, that I made some resolutions, and read them carefully every week; and I am sure, they have not only kept me from many a snare since, but I hope have often quickened me in the pursuit of heavenly things.

'Well, I was going to tell you the resolutions. These are they—I resolved:-

'*First*,—To think of nothing, that would unfit me for communion with God.

'*Secondly*,—To do nothing, on which I could not ask his presence and blessing.

'And, *Thirdly*,—To read nothing, which would make me uneasy, if I should read it before a modest female.'

Lefevre retired from this, and similar converse to his own chamber with a troubled spirit. Once more he fell on his knees, and, with more fervor than he had used for many months, offered his supplications to God. He arose; and gave himself to rest, with a composure, which was the more sensible to him, as he had been so long a stranger to the soothing efficacy of prayer.

In the morning, his feelings were of a more mixed description. If his heart was at all influenced by penitence, it was not free from every emotion of resentment. He was vexed with himself, for having given an opportunity for rebuke; and he was vexed with the indiscriminate, and, as he called it, excessive way, in which Mrs. Russell, administered it.

This lady, indeed, with the noblest intentions, often accelerated the mischief she wished to prevent. In the ardour of her friendship, she would say too much—do too much. In her eagerness to attain a desirable object, she could not pause to ask the best *manner* of securing it. She could not estimate, and classify evils. If a thing was wrong—why, it was wrong—and must be opposed, and protested against, in the same way as any other wrong thing. Like an empiric in medicine, she would exhibit the same remedy for the same disease, without any regard to constitution or character. She did not know, that many weak persons are often hurried into the very thing one would have them avoid, by injudicious and ill-timed opposition.

Unhappily, Lefevre had not learned to separate *advice*, from the *mode* of giving it. Mrs. Russell's remarks, therefore, were not generally successful; sometimes they fretted him into anger; and more frequently tempted him to forget a good admonition, in quarrelling with the way in which it was presented.

In such a state of mind Lefevre sat down to write to his friend Douglas. He determined to submit his situation impartially to his observation; and he fulfilled his determination, as far perhaps as human frailty will allow; for with the utmost candour, and without the least perversion of truth, it commonly happens, that a gloss is given to our actions, by which we and our friends are often deceived into a too favorable opinion of them.—After enlarging on his employments, his society, and his interrupted studies, the letter refers to his religious state, and runs thus:—

'But while I thus exult in the probable issue of my exertions in the office, what shall I say relative to your questions on my religious experience? I cannot tell! I can only say, I am unhappy—*very unhappy*. I have no relish for my old pursuits; and fly from one thing to another, and am still *unhappy*. I dread to relinquish prayer, and yet I have no pleasure in it; and I must confess I have often "restrained prayer before God." I do hear the word but I am sensible it is rather critically,

than devotionally; and my duties at the school are a task instead of a gratification. I lament a mind divided between this world and a better—a heart feelingly alive to all objects but Christ. Not all the promises can at times render me any hope; often have I concluded, that I am intended as an *awful instance how far a man may go in religion and yet be lost!* O, how different to what I was, when we walked together in divine communion! But, I fear I only walked in *your* light; and, now you are removed, my real character appears.

'My dear Douglas, pray for me—counsel me! I could always brook your counsel better than any one's else. "Would that it were with me as in days past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon me, and when by his light, I walked through darkness!" But I resolve, and re-resolve, and live the same!

'I have not much to say of our circle, and nothing I believe that can please you. Our "Literary Society" is dissolved, and the books parted—"Adams's Lectures" are awarded to you. I told you it

would not long survive your absence. Thomas is a shabby fellow, and has spoken shamefully of you, notwithstanding all. I hate ingratitude! I have seen little of Banks. I would do it because you respect him; but he's a conceited pedant to my eye. Have you seen Overton's "True Churchman." Write me without delay.—Tell me seriously, what you think of novel reading.

'Your's, my very dear friend,
'Most affectionately,
'CHARLES LEFEVRE.'

Mr. Douglas complied with his friend's request by replying without delay. It will be proper to introduce the whole letter, and, without doubt, the importance of its contents will qualify its unusual length.

*Mr. Douglas to Mr. Lefevre.*

'*Bala*, ——

'MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

'How has your letter grieved me! I could not read it without offering fervent

prayers for your deliverance; and now, without loss of time, I sit down to notice the parts in which I am most interested.

'If I can form any correct judgment of your case from the account you have given, I may conclude you are in the situation of a person, who is injured, he scarcely knows how; and who, without changing his circumstances, is hardly conscious, that he is exposed to the recurrence of similar injury. But, I do intreat you not to neglect your present state for a moment. A wound is not the less fatal because we know not how we came by it, nor because we choose to pronounce it trifling; and, while ignorant of the cause, we can have no security. It must be detected to be avoided.

'Trace then your present symptoms to the proper source. It will easily be ascertained if you are diligent and sincere in the examination. It may be, you have been guilty, rather in sins of omission, than those of commission; but, remember, it is as dangerous to neglect the things we ought to do, as to do the things we ought

not to do. A fire will go out as certainly by *neglect*, as by the application of uncongenial materials. Religion, like every other living principle, has its element; and to hope to preserve this divine principle in life, without meditation, prayer, self-enquiry, good reading, and pious society, which are its element, is the same thing as to expect the life of a fish while withheld from its native waters, or that of a man while refused the vital air. And, here, it is also to be observed, that the evil is not of a totally negative character. We cannot remove any thing from its peculiar element, without subjecting it to another, and a deleterious element; and, has not my friend reason to refer his present distress to a double cause? Has he not, at once, withdrawn from the influence of religious exercises, and exposed himself to an atmosphere, which, though grateful, has imperceptibly weakened and corroded the springs of spiritual health and life?

'Hasten then, my dear friend, to forsake pursuits and society, which have been so injurious to you—Hasten to return to the

paths of peace and safety you have abandoned. Talk not of the *innocence* of your engagements; whatever they may be to others, they are dangerous to you. It is with the mind, as with the body, food that is wholesome to one constitution, may be deadly to another; and surely those employments, which have wounded your peace, and destroyed your spirituality, will not be able to beguile you into a notion of their innocence. Alas for us! how subtle are "the devices" of Satan! There are more persons ruined by those pleasures, which are pronounced *innocent*, than by those styled *guilty!*

'Fly, fly, then from this enchanted ground! Parley not with the tempter—call not things by his appellatives; but listen to the voice of experience and scripture. Remember that pleasures, which may be appropriate to the worldling, are not so to the *christian.* O, there is nothing more vexatious, than to see those who are called christians, hankering after enjoyments, which they yet profess to be base and unsatisfactory! What is the world to think

of such conduct? Can any thing more effectually belie our professions, and reproach our religion?—We have pleasures of *our own.* Religion takes nothing from us that is worth retaining. All that is *really innocent* in life we enjoy in common with the world, and with a *double* relish; and, in addition to this, we are introduced to the uncloying, sublime pleasures connected with our spiritual existence, as our peculiar and everlasting inheritance. O, let us not pawn this birthright for a mess of pottage! Let us rise into the enjoyments of religion! The spirit of the world must be opposed by the master-spirit of religion. The christian, who is properly under its influence, looks on worldly objects as mean and despicable;—he feels, as I lately felt, on descending from Snowdon. With the sublime scenery still fresh in my mind, and my feelings still swelling with ecstasy, the petty objects about me, neither obtained, nor seemed worthy of, a moment's attention.

'Above all things, my dear Charles, do not despair. He that says, there is no hope

will cast off fear; while "to him that believeth all things are possible." Believe that it is possible to escape the snares in which you have been entangled; — believe that the Saviour is inviting you to himself, and waiting to receive you;—believe that you may yet enjoy all, and much more than you have enjoyed;—nothing can influence your mind more favorably, and nothing is more scriptural.

'Shall I tell you, I was much surprised after the statement in your letter, that you should seriously ask me, what I think of *novel reading*. Can you, then, doubt, that it has united with other evils to reduce you to the present unhappy condition. O, my friend, excuse me if I say, that this, and some other remarks in your letter, tempt me to think, that while you complain of the disease under which you labor, you do not sufficiently dislike and condemn the *causes*. How many are there who would willingly enjoy health, but who will not renounce sensual gratifications as the price of it!

'But, you seem to wish I would give

the question some particular attention. This I will cheerfully do—never was it a burden to me, to meet the request of my friend.

'Perhaps I ought to preface my remarks, by stating, that I by no means object to a tale, or fictitious narrative *as such*. Those who do, appear to me to carry their objections too far; and, by extending, invariably weaken them. Such objections would operate not merely against some of our best prose writings, but equally against the compositions of our finest poets; yet, surely, if there are those who would forbid our perusal of the prose fictions of Johnson, De Foe, and St. Pierre, there are none who would interdict the poems of Cowper, Montgomery, Scott, and Milton. Moreover, I apprehend, that such indiscriminate censure would affect even the Scriptures themselves; for, I know not what we can call the parabolical parts, except it be, truth under the veil of fiction. Indeed, we seem so constituted, as to receive instruction through this medium, with peculiar delight; for every nation,

whether refined or barbarous, serious or gay, has abounded with fictitious combinations, from the engagements of life and the forms of nature, to illustrate moral truth.

'Whilst, however, so much should be conceded, let it be observed, that it is a concession rather, to what is *possible*, than to what is *fact*. I can conceive of a tale being so constructed, as to illustrate and enforce the highest lessons of virtue and religion; but, at the same time, it must be confessed, that the body of existing novels is directed to very different objects. There have, indeed, recently been writers, who have laudably endeavored to wrest this powerful engine from the enemy, and employ it on the side of truth and goodness; but their number is far too few to redeem the *character* of this species of composition. They deserve our gratitude, and will, of course, be an exception from the following objections:—

'*First*, then, I object to novel reading, *as it produces an undue excitement on the mind.* The design of the novel writer is, to interest and inflame the passions; and

this design is generally accomplished, by giving that position to incidents and characters, which shall fill the imagination, and excite the deepest feelings of the heart. This excitation from being pleasing, becomes necessary;—the appetite grows with the gratification, till, at length, the novel reader requires his tale, as the drunkard does his potion.

'The evils of this excitement must be apparent. Where it is indulged, the relish for sober pleasures and rational pursuits is lost;—the understanding and the judgment are enslaved to an inflated imagination;—and *ennui,* the inseparable companion of violent emotion, sheds its destructive mildew on all the soul. The habitual novel reader feeds on essences and liquors, rather than on a temperate and wholesome diet.

'And, if the observation is to be applied to *youth,* the case is aggravated. In youth, the fancy wants restraint, and the understanding, cultivation; a course of novel reading, at this period then, must be as perilous, as the administration of stimu-

lants, where there is every symptom of fever!

'*Secondly*, I object to novel reading, *because it gives false impressions and views of life.* Although it is the boast of the novelist, that he "draws from life," I will venture to say, his descriptions are no more a *fair sample* of life, than the gardens of Italy are a fair specimen of the world, or the portraits in Somerset House a fair representation of our species. It is rather a *selection* from life, than a delineation of it; and, though the copy should be correct, the *impression* will be erroneous. There is too much bustle, and surprise, and agitation; the heart must thrill with fear and hope, through every page of the story; while the days, the months, the years of real life, which pass away in regular duty and quiet happiness, receive neither description nor eulogium.

'But it frequently happens that the exhibitions of life, partial as they are, are *unjust*. Characters are drawn with a monstrous compound of vice and virtue. Passions are described with necessary

consequences, which are by no means consequent. Trifles are raised into importance; events not likely to occur in a lifetime, are made essential to life; and others, common to humanity, and which frequently bring with them little pain or pleasure, cannot be realized without sinking into an abyss of endless misery, or rising to a paradise of everlasting joy.

'But, *thirdly*, my principal objection to novel reading is, *its immoral tendency*. This charge, though a most serious one, is, I fear, to be applied to nearly all the books which pass under the name of novel. In making this assertion, however, I am taking the New Testament as the standard of morality; and by this standard, although there will be no comparison in the shades of guilt, few will escape condemnation.—What are we to say of works which fritter away the distinctions between right and wrong; and deceive the unwary into the paths of vice, by surrounding them with the waymarks of virtue? What are we to say of works, which treat with contempt those admirable qualities industry,

frugality, and prudence; whilst they squander their praises on extravagance, carelessness and folly? What are we to say of works, which alienate the heart from domestic and retired duties—which convert every quiet home into a prison-house—and make the best of parents appear either ridiculous or tyrannical?—What are we to say of works, which are polluted by luscious descriptions of sensual pleasures, lascivious inuendoes, and infidel bon-mots; and which, almost uniformly, make love a passion wholly irresistible? What are we to say of works which justify emulation, pride, vanity, revenge, ambition, and hatred?—of works which, in some cases, become the apologists of drunkenness, fornication, adultery, gambling, duelling, swearing, lying, and suicide?

'To a person ignorant of the subject, it would be thought that this is an aggravated statement; but (as you perhaps know) so far from being such, it may be substantiated without a reference to those works, which are denounced as scanda-

lous. I firmly believe that this representation may be justified from the writings of Swift, Smollett, Sterne, and Fielding alone; and yet their works are "the standard novels," and their names are in highest reputation with the world!

'It is no atonement for these writers, that they occasionally throw out some good moral sentiments—that they satirize *certain vices* which are *unfashionable*—and that they sometimes make the catastrophe speak on the side of virtue. When one vice is condemned to patronize another; when a moral maxim is pinned on to a licentious picture; when a fable, composed of intrigue and wickedness, terminates in a cold allusion to virtue;—virtue and morality are only scandalized and betrayed—they are only made a slight covering to the pitfalls of vice!

'Nor is it any apology that these writers *draw from life.* This has been urged in their favour, with a tone of great assumption; but, as Dr. Johnson has well observed, there are characters and scenes in life that ought *never to be drawn.*

What it is unnecessary and improper for us to see, or hear, or know, it is improper for the novelist to describe. Who would be a voluntary listener to the lewdness, the curses, and imprecations of bacchanalian orgies? Who would think of allowing himself to behold the abominations committed in the resorts of debauchery? Yea, who would choose to witness those innocent expressions of love and tenderness, which can never be proper in the presence of a *third* person? And yet it is not thought improper to make the novel reader *present to all these by description!* Thus it is that the hearts of many are polluted in the retirement of a chamber; and characters and scenes are made familiar to the mind, which, if at all known, ought never to have been dwelt upon.

'But I have said enough—enough to explain my opinions to you; the rest I leave with yourself. I am going to spend this evening with the excellent Mr. Charles, the friend of the Bible Society. I have already been a few hours in his company, and meant to give you a full account of

the interview; but I have expended all my time. A worthy veteran minister, named Evans, was of the party. He is ninety-two years old, and has been fifty in the ministry! He is tall, has a reverend aspect, with fine grey locks resting on his shoulders. His manners are most simple; he seems indifferent to the things of this life; and is most calm and heavenly in his conversation. I have been quite delighted with him, and he is evidently interested in me. On his leaving the room, he unexpectedly put his hand on my head, and blessed me, charging me "to be steadfast in the faith, even unto death." You will hardly conceive what I felt.

'I cannot allow you to be so severe on Mr. Banks. He has a little pedantry, and repulsive manners; but he is a worthy young man; and there is a steadiness of principle and real piety about him, which should commend him to you. Let us look rather to character than to accompaniments. A man

"May smile, and smile, and be a villain still;"

or he may have uncouth habits, and a reserved, cold aspect, and yet have a warm heart and good principles. We must not throw away gold because it is in the ore; nor value tinsel because it glitters. "All are not as they seem." May we ever appear what we are, and be what we ought to be!

'Your's, my dearest Friend,

'Most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

'N.B.—My best regards to all. I am concerned for the fate of the Society. When I shall see you, I cannot yet say; till I do, rest assured of my most earnest prayers.'

## CHAPTER XIII.

SUCH a letter, from a friend so truly beloved, it will readily be believed, made a strong impression on the susceptible mind of Lefevre. He sat silent for some time, ruminating on its contents; and then, springing from his chair, he exclaimed—'Yes, I am wrong—I am wrong! and Douglas is right, and Mr. Russell is right!—I'll alter—and I'll alter now.' And immediately resuming his seat, he began to write some determinations for the government of his conduct.

It was well to resolve on an alteration; better still to do it *immediately*; and the resolutions themselves were excellent. Yet it must be acknowledged, that excellent as the determinations were in their own nature, there was something in the *spirit* of forming them rather too hasty; rather too self-confiding. They seemed to shew a mind disposed rather to resist

temptation than to flee from it; a mind still unwilling to credit its own weakness.

There was likewise an undue expectation of sudden success on the adoption of these resolutions; they were to operate instantly, and by way of charm. He did not consider that they were of the nature of an *alterative*; and that, like all alteratives, they depended, for their efficacy, not on *violent* and *occasional*, but on *moderate* and *persevering* administration. He was not, therefore, prepared to wait for the effect of his own determinations; but was exposed to err with the child; which, on throwing some seeds in the earth, anxiously watches for their growth a few days, and, because they do not then appear, deserts them as fruitless and dead.

In such a state of mind, much was not to be expected even from the best resolutions. Lefevre, like many other patients, used his own prescription most carefully for a short time; but perseverance, an ingredient necessary to the salutary use of all good medicines, was not

at his command; and it was soon neglected, though not wholly abandoned.

Once more he sank into that state of feeling which those persons experience, who have strength enough to form good intentions, but not firmness enough to execute them; a state of miserable dissatisfaction and self-reproach. And yet, at this time, there was nothing in his conduct but what the moralist would approve; nothing that the Christian could exactly condemn. His best and most vigilant friends would, perhaps, have merely complained of a worldly temper. Like many other persons, he had too little religion to be happy out of the world, and too much to be happy in it.

It must, however, be allowed, that the circumstances of Lefevre offered some slight apology for his unsteadiness to his own purposes. His former compliances made it very difficult, if not impossible, to put himself wholly out of the power of temptation. His engagements with the office, to which a reference has been made,

were so compounded of business and pleasure, that it required an unusual effort to separate them; and to say the truth, Lefevre was not *willing* to retrace his steps, as it might provoke the remarks and jests of those whose good opinion he was now too anxious to conciliate. He commenced, therefore, with a design of complying only so far as compliance might *appear necessary*; and, after no great length of time, he became, as was to be expected, too well reconciled to his former habits.

Meanwhile, the undertaking on which Lefevre's heart was set, promised a successful issue; and afforded him all the satisfaction of which it was capable. He had lost indeed the gratification of his own conscience; but he found a substitute, as far as a substitute can be found, in the applause and flattery of his companions. He felt that he was lowering himself in the esteem of his dearest friend; but then he was rising into the notice of others. His memorial and petitions were so well drawn up, as not merely to excite respect with the heads of the house; but to pro-

cure for him the admiration of some of his superiors. They invited him to their tables; approved his motives; complimented his talents; and intimated, in language that "might be made to mean something or nothing—that he *ought*—and *must*—and '*should—if at all possible*—be raised to higher duties in the office.

At length, the agitations of fear and hope gave place to certain enjoyment. The petitioners received a reply announcing, that an advance of salary was decreed in favor of the largest and more necessitous department in the office.—A momentary disappointment was felt that the grant was not universal; and, especially, that Lefevre did not share the benefit; but this quickly yielded to the gladness of heart, which the relief of so many inspired. In the first hurry of the passions, they instinctively surrounded Lefevre, and clamoured forth the feelings of the soul. "Lefevre was their best friend—he had laid them under inexpressible obligations—he knew not how many happy families he had made—their wives should thank him—their chil-

dren should thank him—they would carry the remembrance of his disinterested exertion to the grave—they had nothing to regret, but that he was not benefitted."

After the effervescence of the passions had passed off, it was regularly proposed, and carried by acclamation—"That a handsome silver medal, with a suitable device and inscription, should be given to Mr. Charles Lefevre, as a slight token of their eternal esteem and gratitude:—And, that the said medal, should be presented to Mr. Lefevre at a supper, which they would provide in honor of him."

Lefevre's bosom beat high with exultation. He had never thought much of his own advantage; and now he had not space for regrets. It was enough—more than enough—that he had made so many happy. He left their presence under a shower of sincere blessings; and he himself had, at this moment, been the most blessed of men, had not conscience told him, that in bringing about this good, he had made some unnecessary and *improper* sacrifices.

'The evening for the proposed supper arrived; and no expense was spared to render it worthy of the occasion. Good humour and gaiety prevailed through the company; and to Lefevre it was an hour of triumph. The supper was in honor of him, and every one endeavoured to do him honor.

At length, the cloths were all removed, and they were left to themselves and their wine. They all rose from their seats; and Wallis, in the name of the body, presented the medal to Lefevre with a flattering speech. Lefevre's heart was deeply touched; it was only with a few broken sentences he could make his acknowledgments. As soon as they were uttered, and before they resumed their seats, Wallis gave a bumper toast—"Mr. Charles Lefevre, and may he live in our memories for ever!" It was drank with three-times-three; and Lefevre of course received it with a bumper. Many other toasts followed, and he, as presiding at the table, was obliged to do honor to them. His was a dangerous state; but this was not

the time to feel it or provide against it. His understanding was already intoxicated by the incense of flattery and applause; and his senses were left without their natural safeguard. He concluded, that he *must* do this night as his friends expected. "It would," thought he, "be ungrateful—it would be ridiculous and shameful to resist their expectation *now*,"—and under this impression, he gave himself up to do what "it was impossible for him to avoid doing."

Wine soon became the regent of the meeting; and the cheerful joyance with which it commenced, was followed by obstreperous mirth. Lefevre though he had been more cautious in the use of the glass than many others, was one of the first to reveal its debasing effects. *He* became confused—he talked nonsense—laughed immoderately—and with a turbulent, irregular voice, joined in the chorus of the songs.

There were some present, who observed this with special pleasure. Not because they had any ill-will to Lefevre, but, partly

because they hated his religion, and partly because they had often attempted to carry him thus far, but had been foiled. Now was the time to succeed. They did their best to improve the opportunity; and, who can wonder that they succeeded? Lefevre drank to drunkenness! Intoxication on his irritable system wrought most powerfully. He was violent in his behaviour; was incapable of keeping his balance on the chair; and only found rest on the ground!

Wallis, to do him justice, though he rejoiced that his friend was likely to become 'a hearty fellow,' was not willing he should, on such an occasion, be made the butt of general ridicule; and he engaged two or three near him to carry Lefevre off to a bed-chamber. As they were bearing away their insensible load, one exclaimed, 'Hey day! Mr. Master of the Ceremonies, this is leaving at an early hour indeed.' 'Well,' cried another, 'I think we have washed his methodism out of him now.' 'Ha, ha, ha!' laughed a third, 'and we'll teach him a better method, I'll warrant ye,—didn't I say this religion of his was only a fit, that would soon be over.'

They got out of the room; and one of those most anxious to ensnare Lefevre, jumped into the chair, and gave as a bumper toast,—'Wine and no hypocrisy!'—'Wine and no hypocrisy!'—'no cant!'—'no methodism!'—sounded and resounded, long and tumultuously, from wall to wall.—Such are the triumphs of the world over the fall of professors! And so do those wound religion, who venture on forbidden ground, though protected by *good intentions!*

The next morning, Lefevre awoke from turpid slumbers, and found himself in a strange place, surrounded by unfamiliar sounds. He soon recalled all that had passed the previous evening, while he had any use of his senses, and easily guessed how it terminated. He was inconceivably mortified, that an occasion designed for his honor, should be witness to his degradation; and, as far as his reflections were of a religious cast, they wore the character of remorse and despondency, rather than of sincere repentance. He considered religion to be beyond his hopes; and, there-

fore, without the sphere of his anxiety and exertions; and he resigned himself to pleasures, the vanity and vexation of which, he was, at this moment, painfully realizing!

It was some relief to Lefevre, to find, that though his excesses had humbled him in his own eyes, they had not lowered him in the opinion of his companions. He stood as high with them as usual, and even higher; for, if he had not quite so much claim to their respect, he had stronger hold on their attachments, as he bore more resemblance to them. Cut off from all resources in himself, he lost his independence. He courted the society he had once despised, and solicited the pleasures, which, formerly, he had merely embraced from the difficulty of avoiding them. So does the world debase the heart it fascinates; so do all who listen to the old serpent, share his original curse, 'Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and the dust of the earth shalt thou eat!'

The consequences of such a state of mind might have been awful in the extreme. Happily, however, the good Providence

of God was preparing to counteract them. Whilst Lefevre was a prey alike to remorse and apathy, he received a letter informing him that his brother was dangerously ill, and wished to see him without delay. He loved his brother; and without delay, he hastened to his presence.

How was he astonished and afflicted at the sight of him! His gay, his blooming brother—pale, and ghastly, and convulsed! He had not allowed himself to think of danger; but the hand of death was evidently upon him. He had proposed to comfort him with his sympathy; but delirium prevented. He stood by his side and wept over him. The dying youth turned on his pillow and exclaimed—'Charles!—Charles!—wont you come to me?'—'He is come, he is here,' said an attendant; for Lefevre was unable to reply, he was in the presence of his brother, but was not recognized! 'Oh, Charles! Charles! I didn't think you would have forsaken me.'—'My brother! my brother!' cried Lefevre, sinking down upon the bed, and sobbing hysterically.—'Char—Charl—

Charles! Oh!'—said he convulsively. Lefevre sprang from the bed—'Oh, my brother! speak to me—Robert! speak to me!'—It was in vain—Robert spoke no more—and within half an hour expired!

Death coming so near to him—and in the person of a beloved relative—and at a time when the view of that enemy was so terrible, overwhelmed and astounded all his faculties.

Among his first thoughts, was his mother. 'How could she bear it! It must be broken to her gradually.—He himself must be the messenger of it, that he may endeavour to console her.' Racked as his own feelings were, he now had an object before him, which called for exertion, and he determined on making it. He arranged to set out that very night; and, previously to leaving his brother's apartments, he wrote the following note to his friend Douglas. In the hurry of his feelings, he referred to the event, but omitted to name the *individual*; so that Douglas was left to imagine the nature of the loss.

'*Kensington.*'

'He is gone!—he is gone!—Pray for me. My dear mother! What will she do? I am leaving by the mail this night, to break the matter to her. Adieu.

'CHARLES LEFEVRE.'

As he travelled onward to his maternal home, Lefevre busied his mind in contriving how he might best lighten the heavy tidings to his mother. She had received but one letter, and that letter spoke of illness, but not of danger. She was not at all prepared to learn the worst; and his sudden arrival would startle her into the whole truth at once. He, therefore, thought it best to call on Mr. Palmer, a gentleman who had always shewn himself interested in the concerns of the family; and to beg him to open the way for his appearance. Accordingly, all was done that benevolent or filial sympathy could suggest; but feeble are the best exertions of friendship at such a time; for, what skill, what words, shall charm away the sorrows of a fond mother, grieving for the loss of a beloved son?

While his mother gave her hours to weeping in secret, Lefevre was occupied with a diversity of reflections; the influence of which was, on the whole, favorable. He continued to be oppressed with despondency, and tormented by self-accusation; but not without marks of deep penitence for sin. The removal of his brother, without warning of his peril; his separation from all the allurements of town; his translation to the place where he had so eminently enjoyed religion; all worked powerfully on his mind. The folly of his pursuits—the vanity of the world—the sin of his heart, became conspicuous before him; and he was disposed to dwell upon them with compunction of spirit, rather than shut his eyes upon them because they were disagreeable.

The second evening of his stay, as he was wandering, in such a state of feeling, through some retired paths, for the refreshment of air and exercise, he approached nurse Graham's cottage. He would have shunned almost any other habitation; but he felt inclined to enter

this, and speedily executed his inclination.

The good old woman was seated in her arm-chair, supported by pillows, from which she was now incapable of rising without assistance. It was evident she was drawing fast to her end; yet she appeared free from the influence of positive disease. She would have reminded the observer of nature of the ripened fruit, ready to drop into the bosom of the earth; or the admirer of the Scriptures, of Solomon's inimitable portraiture of old age. To the general decay spread over her frame, was finely opposed the lustre of benevolence and cheerful piety, which still dwelt on her countenance, like the glowing rays of the evening sun, resting on a smiling eminence, after the lower members of the scenery have sunk into obscurity

As soon as Lefevre had made himself known to her, he expressed his surprise at the change which had taken place in her appearance.

'Ah! Mister Charles,' said she, 'changed indeed! A little time makes a

great difference to us old folks. But every change to the Christian is for the better. Sometimes winter—sometimes summer—but its all for the best. I didn't always think so—I am sure of it now. But my *great change* is yet to come! This weak body shall be raised in power—this corruptible shall put on incorruption—this mortal shall put on immortality!'

She paused, evidently dwelling with delight on her own thoughts, and then resumed—'O, what should I do without religion *now!* What could all the world do for me? I am, I hope, thankful for my friends and my comforts—"but they are not my God." My portion is beyond the grave. "Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give." "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" I shall see God—I shall enjoy God—I shall be like God. Yes, *like God*—fashioned like unto my glorious Redeemer! I cannot tell you what pleasure that thought gives me; but why should I?—you know it by experience, Mr. Charles.'

Lefevre sighed inwardly, and wished he did know it as she did.

She thought by his looks he was compassionating her, and continued—'Don't pity me; rejoice with me; I used to think it a fearful thing to die; but that fear is taken away. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me! I have,' said she, changing her look and voice, as by a sudden and painful remembrance, 'I have but one care now belonging to this life!' looking round on her grandson, who stood by her side, with the Bible in his hand, while tears gathered in her eyes.

If Lefevre could not sympathize with the joyous sentiments of his aged friend, he could with this mournful one; and he directly said, 'Do not be anxious about John. I will see that he is provided for.'

Mrs. Graham received the assurance with a convulsive shake of the head. John, who was grown a fine lad, made a

gentle bow, and said, with emotion, 'Thank you, sir; but indeed I cannot leave my gran'mother.'

'Ah! I was thinking how I should part with him,' said she. 'Dear child! he is such a comfort to me! He makes me my tea, and gives me my medicine. He watches over me when I sleep, and reads and talks to me when awake; and, if I'm very poorly, he runs to fetch a neighbour in. But I ought not to think of myself, when its for his good.'

'But, indeed, gran'mother, I cannot leave you,' said the generous boy, kissing her hand as it rested with his on the arm of the chair. 'O, hav'n't you been my mother and father, and all; and would it not be wicked of me to leave you now? Don't fret about me dear grandma,' continued he, observing her troubled countenance, 'Don't you remember what Dr. Mills said, "that if I took care of you, God would take care of me."'

'You shall not be separated in life!' said Lefevre, struggling with his feelings:

'But, let this comfort you nurse,—if God should remove you, you may rely on it I will take care of John.'

'The blessing of the widow and the fatherless come upon you!' she cried, with joy glistening through her tears. "It's not to be told our obligations to you and yours. You like to make the poor happy—you do—and great is your reward in heaven!'

It was with difficulty Lefevre withdrew from this interesting cottage. In returning home its inhabitants filled his thoughts. He was gratified to drive care from the last hours of an aged saint; but suffered all the pain a generous mind can endure, under praises it is conscious it does not merit.

Lefevre had avoided the walk in which he and his friend Douglas had so fully enjoyed themselves, as it would, he knew, affect him painfully; yet he could not allow himself to leave the neighbourhood without a visit. The third and last evening of his continuance, therefore, he bent his steps towards it; sometimes inclined to turn them

off to another path, but, in the end, fulfilling his original purpose.

The evening was rather heavy than fine. A stillness pervaded nature; but it was a stillness that foreboded commotion and storm. Every thing seemed in fellowship with himself; he was pensive, melancholy, and disposed to tears, without actually weeping. 'Here,' said he, as he paced the verdant avenue, 'we walked and thought of things unutterable—and here,' throwing himself carelessly on the seat, 'we sat, and talked, and sung ourselves into another world But it is all past—all past for ever. O, how dreadfully easy is it, in the company of the religious, to persuade ourselves that we are like them! I am like the chameleon. I take the character of those I mix with, but have none of my own. O Douglas! could you now see me, how altered would you find me! A thing without hope—without joy—a worldling—a—yes—a drunkard!

At this moment he thought he heard a rustling amongst the copsewood behind

him. He turned--but saw nothing; and resting his aching head on his hand, sunk into bitter thoughtfulness. He heard the noise much nearer to him. He turned again,—and—Douglas stood before him! The unexpected sight of his friend strengthened all the sensibilities which had been awakened in his soul. They clasped hands in silence, and Lefevre fell on the bosom of Douglas, and wept aloud.

To recover him to himself, Douglas endeavoured to divert his attention, by referring to an interview so unexpected. He was on the western side of Lancashire when he received Lefevre's note; he could not allow a few score miles to separate him from his friend in deep and doubtful trouble; he, therefore, crossed the country immediately, and, on not finding him at home, it occurred to him he might possibly meet with him in their old favorite walk.

'O Douglas, I do not deserve this kindness!' exclaimed Lefevre. 'You know not how unworthy I am of your friendship!'

'Unworthy or worthy, my friend-

ship shall always be your's,' replied Douglas.

Lefevre then referred to the loss of his brother; and entered freely and candidly into a statement of his past conduct. Douglas, although his affection had often led him to fear for his friend, had not conceived one half of the truth, and now it was exposed before him, he was filled with surprise and grief. He entered into an earnest conversation with him on his present critical situation. He combated his despondency, encouraged his hopes, excited his caution, and endeavoured to fix his mind against the temptations, to which he would again return. His benevolent exertions appeared successful, and the evening closed, a witness to their mingled sorrows and supplications. The following extract from a letter of Douglas, written a few days afterwards, is a renewal of the subject, and may serve to give a better idea of the conversation than any imperfect recollections:—

'I regret that my feelings were so excited on Wednesday evening, as to pre-

vent my saying all I wished to say. I have, however, still an opportunity of expressing myself, and most willingly would I suggest something comfortable and beneficial to your mind.

'I was, principally, affected to observe the tendency you discovered to *despair*. No evil is to be dreaded more than this. Where it is found no good can dwell. It withers up the energies of the soul—it averts the eyes from the work of redemption—it shuts up the heart in obstinate impenitence. Your present circumstances may well give birth to prayer, to penitence, to circumspection: but they should by no means engender despair. There is every thing in God—every thing in the character of the Saviour—every thing in the spirit of the gospel, to encourage hope,—nothing to countenance despair. Hope is presented to the most miserable—the most criminal—of human beings; if we lose hope then, it is not because it is withheld, but because we cast it away from us. Cherish then, I entreat you, as a most invaluable blessing, the hope of

salvation! Not that ignorant, indolent, indefinable hope, which springs, like the ignis fatuus, from the very bosom of corruption. This is miscalled; it is not hope but presumption. Cherish that operative, spiritual, and immortal hope, which the scriptures describe, as eclipsing the world, purifying the heart, and laying hold of things invisible!

'Should you find, that the review of the past becomes an obstruction to your hopes, I would advise you *to begin your religion afresh.* I have found wonderful advantage in this simple rule. Many persons spend time in seeking after evidence of their *past* christian character, when it would be much better employed, in an *immediate* application to the Saviour. Say in such seasons of doubt,—"If I have not been really penitent I will desire to be so *now*;—if I have not relied on the Saviour, I will rely on him *now*;—if I never have surrendered myself to him, I will make the surrender *now*." This often foils the enemy, at a moment, when he has been arranging a train of objections to our *former* piety.

'You wish me candidly to refer to the defects of your character. This is not an easy task. I know not all my own defects; how can I, then, pretend to a knowledge of your's? Moreover, I have always dwelt, as every friend should, rather on your excellencies than your infirmities; I could, therefore, more readily speak of what is good in you, than of what is faulty.

'However, as you desire it, I will candidly name one defect, which I cannot avoid considering your *principal* one. It is this—you *appear to me, to be too much under the government of your feelings—too little under the control of principle.* You do what you are *inclined* to do, rather than what you *ought* to do. You act rather at the persuasion of the *passions,* than from the conviction of the *judgment.* Reason sometimes asserts its rights, and forms its decisions; but they are borne down by the stronger impulse of feeling. Now there is no safety for us in such a condition. Our feelings *may* impel us to a good action; but this is only accidental; they are more *likely* to incline us to a wrong one. They are a mere *energy,* neither good nor bad in

themselves; but deriving all their character from their associations. When under the direction of good principles, they are, like the heat of the sun, the source of life and joy; when without such direction, they are, like the lightnings of heaven, and blast every thing they touch!

'I fear I am giving pain in thus noticing a failing, of which no doubt you are sensible; but it is necessary to be reminded of our weaknesses, that we may be urged to Him who is strong, for strength. Nothing but his grace and power can be sufficient for us. Without these we shall never rise to dignity of character—never conquer the selfishness of passion—never deny ourselves, and follow Him! Let us, then, be constantly looking unto him as our guide and example. Moral critics have indeed told us, that a perfect example cannot possibly interest or influence creatures circumstanced as we are; but they are confronted by the higher authorities of the New Testament, which, both in precept and example, presents *perfection alone* before us. We are enjoined to imitate Christ; and only to copy others as they

copy him. And, who shall say, that his holy example, as far as it is meant for human imitation, is not interesting?—is not adapted to touch the heart? O! my dear Charles, let others speak for themselves, but I am sure nothing affects me like the life and conversation of the Redeemer, as it is reported by the disciples! Such wisdom and such meekness—such tenderness and such dignity—such sanctity and such condescension—such serenity in the midst of provocations—such benevolence in defiance of ingratitude and enmity—such resignation and fortitude under unparalleled sufferings! That heart is indeed "a heart of stone," that remains unaffected by them! Let us then begin our course afresh. Let us set this ineffable example always before us; and not only look at it, but *study* it, with a design to *imitate* it. When thinking—let us ask, how the Saviour would have thought; when speaking—let us ask, what he would have said; when acting—let us enquire what he would have done!

'I feel strongly in this subject, because I am sensible of having neglected it. Like

many other christians, I was resting on the Saviour's atonement, and breathing general desires for conformity to him; but my mind did not sufficiently *dwell* on his *example.* Amongst other things, a controversial and dogmatical ministry had, I doubt not, a large share in prolonging this neglect. I rejoice that I am now aware of the error. I would redeem the time, and gaze, with a single eye, on this glorious object till I reflect all its glories. O, imperfect and sinful as we are, who can tell to what we may rise with his example before us, and his grace within us!

'After you left us, I retired to our favorite avenue. I walked with you again in spirit; and committed you and myself into the hands of Him, who is all-mighty and all-gracious. I send you a few lines which occurred before I quitted the retreat. I go to-morrow to Doncaster, and expect to be in London next week. Your mother is as composed and comfortable as the nature of her trial will admit. Adieu! my very dear friend,

'Your's most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

## *Hymn.*

AH! lend me the wings of a dove
To fly from these regions of woe,
My hopes and my joys are above,
And thither my spirit would go;
I long with my Saviour to rest,
Beyond the assault of my foes;
And lean with a smile on his breast,
No pillow can yield such repose!

How pleas'd and how bless'd should I be
To gaze on this beauteous face,
While love and compassion to me
Lend every expression a grace!
No cloud should bewilder my sight,
No sigh from my heart should arise;
But, filled with ecstatic delight,
All tears should be wiped from my eyes!

Ah! then should I cease to offend
The Saviour I love and adore;
His grace, without limit or end,
Should reign in my heart evermore;
All pure as the spirits above,
Each thought should exult in his name,
Each passion, resigned to his love,
With rapture his praise should proclaim!

## CHAPTER XIV.

THERE is a period in the moral as in the natural life, which may be emphatically called *critical.* Character as well as existence, seems sometimes trembling in the balance; and the mind of the spectator is suspended in anxious uncertainty, between the fluctuations of hope and fear. With such feeling the attention must be given to the present part of this narrative, if the preceding chapters have succeeded in exciting an interest in favor of Lefevre. It is in the progress of the history, however, that anxious enquiry will meet with the most appropriate satisfaction.

Notwithstanding the unexpected arrival of his friend, Lefevre departed the next morning, as he had previously designed, for the Metropolis. His brother was yet to be interred; and he determined to pay him the last offices of respect and kindness. Douglas rejoiced in this arrangement, as

he judged the scene would strengthen those impressions, of which Lefevre was happily the subject. In this judgment he was not mistaken.

Lefevre's sensibilities were soon quickened by the presence of any touching object; but this was eminently affecting. It was the remains of his brother—his beloved brother—his younger brother—torn away from the circle of health and pleasure—perhaps, without time to think of death, or supplicate for pardon. All these articles of grief and endearment filled his mind. The descent of the body into the earth, seemed to place an impassable gulf between them; and his heart was overwhelmed within him. He hastened to retirement—he burst into tears, and exclaimed, 'Oh, Robert! Robert! would that I had di——.' His tongue failed him. He was not in a state to die.—'O, God! I thank thee, that I am yet in the land of the living, to repent of my sins!'

On becoming more composed, he read a considerable portion of Young's 'Night Thoughts.' They just accorded with the

state of his mind. Looking from the grave upon the world, every thing was vain and trifling. Fame was a bubble—wealth was rubbish—pleasure was vexation—and life a troubled dream!—Death—eternity—the soul, were the only objects worthy of regard! He did not, as formerly, sit down to write out resolutions for his future conduct; he thought himself wholly dead to the power of temptation.

In the estimate of life he was now taking, he confounded innocent with dangerous pleasures; things trifling, with things valuable; and they were submitted to a common sentence of condemnation. Even nature, literature, and friendship, appeared as a mere blank to him; and he knew not how he should be able again to obey the vocations of business. He blamed himself, and pitied the world. In the close of the evening, when Mrs. Russell was expressing her partiality for a certain dress, he remarked, with a degree of feeling hardly suitable to one who professed such indifference to the things of this life, "that it was wonderful how christians

could have such strong likes or dislikes about a paltry dress.'

'Very true, my dear Charles,' said Mr. Russell, 'it is a wonder, that christians have such *strong* feelings about worldly things; but, let us avoid *extremes*—my old copy book used to say, "Extremes are dangerous." While we are in this life, the things of it are to have some attention. There is something to be done—something to be enjoyed. We should feel towards the world as a pilgrim, whose chief anxiety is to find a safe and comfortable passage through it, and who is yet grateful for the accommodations it affords.'

The exaggerated feeling excited in Lefevre's mind by the presence of death and the power of remorse, was speedily corrected by his active habits, and the call of duties over which he had no option.

In addition to the claims of stated and official duty, he had soon to listen to the voice of benevolence. Not long after his return, he received an affecting letter from his mother, bewailing her loss, and expressive of her reliance on 'her Charles—

her only hope;' but noticed here, principally, because it contained the news of nurse Graham's death. Lefevre had given this excellent saint a solemn pledge; and, now, he must redeem it. This was an employ that suited his warm heart, and he pursued it, as he did every thing, with all his might. His best wishes were exceeded; he obtained an excellent situation for John Graham, at the west end of the Town; and Douglas, who had reached London, offered to join him in advancing a required premium. Raised to a degree of joy, he thought nothing in this life could again afford him, he hastily wrote a letter announcing his success, and begging the boy might be sent immediately. 'There,' said he, as he had sealed the letter, and threw it on the table, 'if I can only serve this poor deserving boy, I shall not have lived in vain. O, what a pleasure warms the heart whilst we are endeavouring to do good!'

Lefevre now stood on a better footing with himself than he had done for many months past; and hope was shining on his future path. The loss of his brother; the

confidence of his parent; the society of his friend; and the bitter sense of worldly folly, impressed his mind beneficially; and the restraints imposed on his intercourse with the world for a few weeks, by decorum itself, promised time to ripen the good seed into fruits meet for repentance.

There was but one circumstance which seemed unfavorable; and that was the connexion still existing between Lefevre and the social, friendly Wallis. Douglas avoided noticing this, lest he should be thought desirous of engrossing the attachment of his friend; and he was not without hope, that the very presence and conversation of Wallis might, in the present state of Lefevre's mind, produce the effect he wished more certainly than any thing he could say on the subject. The event proved that there was propriety in this hope; and, if it was not fully realized, it was because there were hindrances of which he was ignorant.

One evening, a few weeks after the death of his brother, as Lefevre was sitting with Douglas, busy in the pursuits of

literature, Wallis entered the room, exclaiming with an air of victory—

'Well, Charles, what say you to methodism now? There's Mr. L—— and your favorite Mr. F—— have been playing off nicely, hav'n't they? Church or chapel you see, it's all one!—It's just as I told you—Hav'n't you heard of it?'

'Yes,' said Lefevre, with a suppressed sigh, 'I have heard of it indeed!'

The persons referred to were popular preachers in London, who had most woefully dishonoured religion by their conduct. Wallis had often found he could shake Lefevre's confidence in his religious persuasions, by the dereliction of professors, when other means totally failed; and he could not pass over this striking opportunity.

Douglas saw how his friend was affected, and took up the discourse.—'Excuse me, Mr. Wallis, if I say, that it appears neither humane nor generous to exult over the frailties of our nature. We should *lament* the fall of character, and not triumph over it.'

'Fall of *character!*' O, excuse me in my turn, if I am not quite so serious. Call it *fall of the mask*—that's a better term—They only shew *now*, that they were mere *pretenders* to be better than their neighbours—All men are alike, depend upon it—If there is a difference, it is only that some wear the mask, and others dare to be honest.'

'As far as the persons in question are concerned,' replied Douglas, 'what you advance may be too true: but I cannot agree to your converting particular instances into a general rule. All men are not hypocrites because some are so. On the contrary, I believe that pretension and hypocrisy always suppose the pre-existence of real excellence, as the shadow supposes the existence of the substance. Do you not think that the counterfeit coin in circulation amongst us, *implies* the existence of a sterling coinage?'

'Heigh, heigh!' exclaimed Wallis, endeavouring to make his escape from this question—'all very eloquent, no doubt. But let me ask, in my turn, whether this

is not taking things by *appearances?* Trust me, if we look superficially at men, we shall be duped by what somebody calls—no matter who—their brilliant vices. You must look into the heart; you will there find, whatever varieties of character may present themselves in the gallery of life, that all the *supposed* virtues have but one root—*selfishness.* Yes, yes—selfishness, in one way or other, rules the court, the city, and the cottage.—You should read Pope, and Cogan, and Shaftesbury.'

'I thank you for your gratuitous recommendation,' said Douglas. 'But, without noticing names, which have such different claims on us, I must say, on this subject, I had rather consult my bible and common sense.'

'Well, well, the *bible* if you please. That will bear me out in my assertions. Some of our greatest divines, I believe, allow *that self-love is the root of all the virtues.*'

'With all deference to your divines, I must beg leave to distinguish between what *they* allow, and what the *Scriptures*

*themselves* allow. The Scriptures teach me that man, in falling from God, fell into himself; and that, in his natural and sinful state, he is indeed under the influence of selfishness. Self is his motive; self is his rule; self is his end. So far they favour your opinion, and we are agreed. But the same Scriptures inform us, that man, under a gracious influence, is redeemed from this vortex of debasing selfishness; that a principle of divine benevolence is implanted in his heart; that he is made a *new* creature; that he is taught to *deny himself*; that he does not live for himself; that his will—his honor—his life—are devoted to the glory of Him who has recovered him to virtue and immortality. This is the plain testimony of the Bible; and this, without perplexing it with the subtleties of the metaphysical school, I cordially believe. The mind, in its natural state, may become profound in general science; but let us remember "that the natural man cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God."'

'Ha! now you are getting into the

clouds—and I profess I can't follow you—for I am none of your ethereal beings. Fine outlandish notions—Fresh from the *lake of Geneva* I presume—hey, Mr. Douglas?'

'Say, from the *lake of Gennesareth*, if you please,' replied Douglas with a smile. 'But I am afraid, if it could be proved that they come direct from heaven, you would reject them purely because they are serious. You seem to have a constitutional horror of what is serious; and yet, Mr. Wallis, time will come when you *must be serious*.'

Wallis involuntarily coiled his body for a moment in uneasiness, and then assuming his gay smile, continued—'You're quite right—serious days, like rainy weather, are sure to come,—so it would be folly to anticipate them. You know what David Hume used to say, "It is better to be born to look on the *bright side* of things, than to be born to £10,000 a year."'

'I am much of the same opinion, I acknowledge,' replied Douglas. 'But this is a strange assertion for a *sceptic* to make.

Is to doubt the existence of every thing, to look on the *bright side* of things? For my part, I think the bright side of every thing, is that side which is illuminated by the light of truth and religion.'

'Well, I think with you—a state of doubt is very far from a state of comfort—so we are agreed,'—said Wallis, anxious to end this over-righteous conversation. 'Charles,' continued he, 'I have a message from my sister. She sends you this ticket, (presenting it) with her compliments. It is B——'s benefit to-morrow night. We want to pack a few friends for him. Will you go?'

'To the play!' said Lefevre, looking upon his mourning habit, evidently mortified at his friend's want of sympathy.

'Yes, my dear fellow, to the play. It will amuse your mind, and raise your spirits. I know you mourn your loss; but you must not grieve for ever—you will bring yourself into a bad way. And you know also,' said Wallis, looking with an arch smile towards Douglas, 'excessive grief is *sinful*.'

'It is a crime,' said Douglas, 'that I think will never be laid to your charge, Mr. Wallis.'

'I shall never see a play again,' said Lefevre. 'I have other than *temporary* reasons.'

'Pooh! Pooh! that's only a compliment to Mr. Douglas. I know what you like, and what you don't like.'

'I believe,' said Douglas, 'our friend is not accustomed to sacrifice truth to compliment; and, on a subject where there are such strong reasons to govern his decisions, I am disposed to hope he will never more be tempted to hesitancy.'

'Well, Douglas, this is not worthy of you. You are liberal and candid in most things; but here you are too rigid. The stage is the school of morality—the mirror of the world—the panorama of life—the very centre where instruction and amusement meet, and meet in all their attractions.'

'Such are the epithets employed by play writers, and play actors, and play goers; but the best and wisest of men

have agreed in reversing them. In their sober estimation the stage is "the puppet show of life,"—"the school of vice,"—"the vortex of debauchery,"—"the strong hold of the god of this world,"—"the vestibule of destruction." In this judgment I am disposed fully to concur. You call the theatre the school of morals. Refer me to any who have been reformed by it. In other worldly amusements, something is preserved in deference to the claims of innocence and modesty; but in this, there is the least possible proportion of good, with the greatest possible amount of evil. Snares are laid for the eye, the ear, the imagination, and the heart. The company—the spectacles—the music—the sentiments—have all a simultaneous tendency; they seek to throw down the mounds of virtue, and to lay waste the excellencies of human character!'

'Well,' said Wallis, looking astonished, 'I know not what to say to you now. This is too severe—too vehement!'

'It is severe, I acknowledge,' resumed Douglas; 'but I cannot confess that it

is *too* severe. I speak with seriousness and warmth; and the weight of the subject must be my apology. I speak as one who once stood on these dangerous precipices, and who yet trembles to think to what he was exposed. I speak as one who discovers that his friend (looking towards Lefevre) has been exposed to the same dangers, and is yet liable to temptation. I speak as one convinced that many a child of promise has lost his principles—his modesty—his character,—in these haunts of wickedness; and has converted the pleasures of parental hope into the bitter agonies of a broken spirit. Surely with such sentiments one *must* be serious, and even *fervid!*'

'With *such sentiments!*' said Wallis, 'But I think such sentiments are not right. You condemn every thing, and in the gross—This can't be right. Who is it that says—I forget at this moment—"That most general censures are unjust?" This is my opinion.'

'And it is mine,' replied Douglas. 'If I am obliged to censure in this case uni-

versally, I am far from doing it without discrimination. The performances themselves, and those who have prepared them, may be classed under every degree of comparison. There are a few who have written for the stage, with the desire of reforming and exalting its amusements; and we are certainly bound to respect the *intention.*'

'And supposing the stage could be purified, would you *then* object to it?'

'This,' returned Douglas, 'is to suppose an *impossibility.* It is precisely what is objectionable that is delicious and attractive; take this away, and the attendants would as cheerfully go to church, as fill their seats at the theatre. But, supposing this purification possible, I should still have my objections ——'

'Unconscionable!' interrupted Wallis.

'Here me out,' resumed Douglas, 'I do not object to dramatic composition abstractedly considered. I think it an admirable way of writing, and it may obviously be employed in a good cause, as effectually as in a bad one; but I do object

to the *acting* of the drama, though it should be composed agreeably to every claim of morality and religion. To say nothing of what the actors, from the very nature of the profession, would still be,—the assumption of unreal passions—the hypocritical prayers and vows which must still be uttered —and, above all, the exhibition of that tender intercourse, innocently sustained between a lover and his mistress—a husband and his wife (intercourse that ought never to be exposed to the eye of a spectator) —and this intercourse supported by persons who are not sanctioned by *any* relationship—could not fail to have a most deleterious influence on the morals of *all*, but especially on those of the *young*.'

'You're prejudiced upon my honor, Douglas. Why, if this were the case, what a deleterious influence they must have had on *me*; but indeed I am not sensible of it.'

'Will you forgive me if I say, that this is no proof of the contrary. May not your moral sensibilities have been rendered obtuse, by these amusements. When you

*first* attended the theatre, did you see nothing to shock you? When you *first* read Shakspeare, was your modesty never offended?'

'Shakspeare!' exclaimed Wallis, glad to fly off from these questions—'the immortal—the unrivalled—the divine Shakspeare!—Why surely you wo'n't venture to raise your tongue against Shakspeare?'

'I will venture to say what I think,' said Douglas, 'when it is proper to speak at all. I believe I am as sensible as any one of the wonderful talents of that Poet. For force of language—for exhaustless invention—for an insight into human nature—for a power to touch and rend the heart—he is unequalled—and stands amongst dramatists, like the diamond amongst pearls. But, while I honor his intellectual capacities, I must deeply lament their miserable abuse. So far from having a moral end before him, he has frequently its opposite; and, at the best, seems indifferent to moral results. He often rises like the eagle into overpowering sublimity; but this is rather the effect of his mental

energy, than of his *choice;* his element is evidently in scenes of sensuality, profligacy, and lewdness. His licentious witticisms—his lascivious insinuations—his corrupt allusions, many times repeated,—reveal a heart revelling in its own abominations; and render, both him and his works, in a *moral* light, the objects of indignation and disgust!'

'Well, well,' said Wallis, 'it is a good thing this is said in a private room amongst friends. If the world knew it, you would be placarded in all the streets of London for a blockhead or a madman.'

'No matter which,' returned Douglas, 'so that it be not incurred by my own imprudence. I think it is high time to speak out on this subject. Shakspeare is the great national idol, whom religious and profane seem willing to worship. Our christian writers have, in complaisance to the world, joined in his unqualified and unlimited praise, without noticing the *moral character* of his works. Numbers of religious persons, of high pretensions, but slender claim, to taste and literature, have

justified such praise, lest their claim should be disputed, till, at length, a word against Shakspeare, is something like a word against our King and Constitution.'

'Treason to be sure,' cried Wallis, 'well, let us have no more literary treason. Odds! it little matters, in these days, whether you lose your head on Tower-hill, or bring down upon it the sentence of a *critical* tribunal.'

'Rely upon it,' said Douglas, 'I have no pleasure in saying so much. It is painful to expose the errors of a great genius; and nothing but a strong sense of duty would dispose me to it. But I remember the dangers to which I was liable; and, there are thousands of young persons still in a similar situation. It was the fine quotations and boundless encomiums of this poet, in writings of most unquestionable religious character, that first induced me to read his dramas. I entered on them as on a Paradise of sweets and loveliness. Little did I expect to find the serpent of vice concealed amongst its beauties!—and well may I wonder at my escape from its

seductions under such circumstances!—It is no very difficult thing to avoid vice, when we are aware of its presence, and it appears in its own deformity; but, who shall escape, when it borrows the forms of virtue, and is adorned with all the fascinations of Shakspeare's pencil?'

'Well Charles,' said Wallis, a little baffled, 'after such solemn discourse about play going, I suppose you wo'n't go; so I shall carry Jane your negative—and good evening to ye!'

'I should hope *you* will not go till you have reconsidered the matter,' said Lefevre.

'O, as to that, I am none of the considering sort. I must leave that to you and Mr. Douglas. The time for enjoying pleasure is over whilst one's considering about it—

Seize on pleasures as they fly,
Now we live—to-morrow die;
Time is stealing fast away,
Seize on pleasure while you may!

'A fine heathen sentiment,' said Douglas; 'more worthy of the meridian

of Constantinople than of London.—I confess I have no sympathy with the man, who can live in a world of such misery and guilt as this, for the mere purposes of *pleasure*. What, have we no temptations to resist—no propensities 'to mortify—no self denying duties to perform ?—Have we no concern for the degraded—the wretched condition of human nature?—Is there no hell to shun—no God to supplicate—no heaven to pursue? O, Mr. Wallis, allow me to say, if you refuse to think seriously *now*, a time will come when you will be *compelled* to it.'

The earnest sincerity with which Douglas made this address, affected Wallis. He feigned a smile to cover his feelings, and taking him by the hand as he left the room, he observed with an averted countenance—'Well, well, you have good intentions Douglas. I wo'n't quarrel with you—good evening!'

## CHAPTER XV.

ALTHOUGH Lefevre took but a small share in the preceding conversation, he was far from being an uninterested auditor. His friends were placed in direct contrast before him; the state of his mind, from his circumstances, was unusually inclined towards Douglas; and he felt ashamed that his heart should be divided between two persons of such different character. Pained with his own inconsistency, he rested his head upon his hand, and said to himself, 'O, Wallis, you are an usurper! Douglas, after all, is the choice of my heart. I can repose on his friendship in the hour of adversity. I will break with you ——.' Then, as if filled with a distressing recollection, he resumed, 'No: I cannot break with him now. I cannot appear mean and ungenerous. I must *first* ——' And then he started from his position with vexation.

The vexation of Lefevre arose from his having laid himself under some obligations to Wallis. These obligations were of a pecuniary nature; and it may be desirable to take some notice of their occurrence, as they had no slight influence on his course.

Lefevre, when immediately under maternal control, had a liberal supply of pocket-money, which he generally expended in superfluities; this probably led him to a careless use of money in general. On his coming to London, and being master of a small income, he thought his resources nearly inexhaustible, and drew upon them accordingly. Naturally fond of a neat and good appearance, he became rather extravagant in his dress. Thing after thing was ordered; and he concluded that his quarterly receipts would easily cover every demand, without taking the trouble to *calculate:* whilst the generosity of his temper, and the general sentiments of the young men around him, established him in the belief that it would

be contemptible and ridiculous to *care about money.*

If the care of money was to be thought contemptible, Lefevre soon found the opposite conduct had its inconveniences. He was surprised, to find, quarter after quarter, bills accumulate upon him; and his surprise amounted to confusion when, on putting the *little* bills together, he saw they made so great a *total!* Such early embarrassment might have imposed upon him habits of economy and calculation, had it not been for an ill-timed indulgence on the part of his affectionate mother. His hints at the poverty of his purse, induced her to make occasional remittances for his assistance; till, in the end, he accustomed himself to reckon on them, as a part of his income. This was likely to increase the evil; and he continued in that free and thoughtless use of money which speedily gave a more serious aspect to his perplexities. His applications to his mother, under these difficulties, became so direct and frequent, that, at

length, she took alarm, and remonstrated with her son on the subject, assuring him that she must, in future, confine her assistance to a *small* and *certain* sum, which she would forward annually.

This was a great disappointment to Lefevre. Something he must do to extricate himself, and that immediately. The friendship of Douglas seemed to invite him to explain his difficulties to him; but his pride resisted the suggestion: he feared it would lower Douglas's respect for him; and he knew that he would not fail to express surprise and concern on the occasion. It was about this period that Lefevre renewed his connection with Wallis, on the business of the office. His attachment to Wallis was not attended with that esteem and respect which marked his friendship for Douglas; he, therefore, found it comparatively easy to intimate his straitened situation to him. Wallis was just then seeking to weaken the influence of Douglas, and to tie Lefevre to himself; and he fairly rejoiced at so favorable an opportunity. He understood the wishes

of Lefevre before they were half express-ed, and insisted on his accepting twice the sum he had named, with the air of a man who was receiving rather than conferring a favor.

This conduct powerfully affected the open and generous mind of Lefevre. It did, indeed, to his eye, hide a multitude of sins; and so bound him to Wallis, that even when conscience, as we have seen, reproached him with continuing the intimacy, the weight of obligation withheld him from breaking it. So true it is that a state of debt and of dependence are inseparable.

Meanwhile Wallis's assistance, though it afforded Lefevre temporary relief, did not really benefit him. It encouraged him rather to rest his hopes on expedients and favourable accidents, than on a determination of living within his *certain* income. 'Wallis,' he allowed himself to think, 'would still do more for him if he required it; he *might* soon obtain a rise in the office, and that would set all right; and if these failed, he had no doubt that his mother and

Douglas would do their utmost for him, on an emergency.' With such vague and unjust reliances, it may easily be expected that, on slight temptation, Lefevre would involve himself in even greater expenses than those which he had already found too large for his income. This was really the case. His reunion with Wallis; his liberality to the distressed persons in the office; his coffee-house suppers; his encreased taste for company; and his abhorrence of every thing mean and shabby; and particularly his having made himself responsible for some debts of his deceased brother, had joined to throw him into a state of embarrassment more serious than at any former period.

Lefevre, though not fond of obligation to any one, felt not the evil of his obligations to Wallis, till the moment in which he resolved to break with him. He then discovered that they had robbed him of a portion of his independence; and that, should he do what he thought his duty, Wallis might charge him with ingratitude and baseness. The reflection was bitter to

him; but he confirmed his intentions by prayer, and laid himself on his pillow that evening, resolving to recover himself from his engagements to Wallis, and drop a friendship which was prejudicial to his best interests.

The ensuing morning, as Lefevre was thinking how he might best carry his purposes, he was served with a copy of a writ! It was the first he had received. It alarmed him. It was from a tradesman least expected to act so, as he had done much to serve and recommend him. His pride and kindness were wounded. He sat still and silent a few moments; he rose and paced the room, repeating the words, 'base, insolent, worthless fellow!' and then he returned to his chair, sensible of the folly of railing, and the necessity of doing something for his personal liberty, without delay. 'And what,' said he, 'can I do? The sum is small—not ten pounds—but what does that signify?—small as it is, I *cannot* pay it. O, I never knew the misery of debt till now!—What shall I do? Douglas?—No—I will not apply to Doug-

las—he will despise me. I will not be despised; and yet, do I not despise myself?—Wallis?—shall I go to him?—that will only encrease the obligations I purposed to abolish! Well, I cannot help it, I must apply somewhere—and I know he will be kind—Hard is my fate.'—How apt are we to impeach Divine Providence, when we have nothing to complain of but our own imprudence!

Lefevre hastened to the dwelling of his friend, and explained his situation to him. Wallis received him just as he could have wished.—'Ungrateful impudent fellow,' exclaimed he,—'plague on him! Put your mind at rest—leave it all with me—I'll shew him a trick or two for this, I warrant you. Leave it to me—you shall hear no more about it—I'll see him—and he shall either take my word for the payment, or, if that wo'n't do, I'll settle the account at once—if he dare to take it.' Lefevre's anxieties subsided, and left him wholly the subject of admiration and gratitude. He seized the hand of his friend,—'Thank you! thank you!' said his lips;

—'Generous Wallis!' said his heart, 'why did I think of breaking with you!—I will never ——' His convictions struggled with his overwrought feelings—he could not expressly resolve on inviolable friendship.

Wallis knew how to use to advantage the emotions his conduct had excited. In his late call on Lefevre he had witnessed the superior power which Douglas had over him, and he was fretted by it, as far as his self-complacent temper could be fretted. It was now a greater *point* with him than ever to make Lefevre his *own*, and to lower his regard for his rival. To do this he was aware, he was not to employ argument or invective—he must flatter the pride of Lefevre—he must withdraw him from the presence of his friend,—he must get him into other society.

An opportunity equal to his highest wishes presented itself. He was going to spend a week with a relative at Sevenoaks, as one of a little hunting party. He informed Lefevre of it, and pressed him in the most cordial manner to get leave of

absence for the time; and go with him. Lefevre made a few hesitating objections; but Wallis, bent on the object, soon removed his scruples, and it was agreed, that they should go together. This engagement was followed by some misgivings, but he did not dwell upon them. His worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Russell were merely told he was going out of town for a few days, and Mr. Douglas knew it only by a short note, sent to him on the morning of his leaving home. So surely does a practice, which our conscience condemns, lead the most ingenuous minds to concealment.

The anticipated week was a week of pleasure. The mornings were given to sporting, and the evenings to convivial mirth. Lefevre was quite in his element. He was fond of the saddle; and field sports well suited the ardency of his temper. Wallis introduced him to his acquaintance with high compliments; and he became eager to honor the introduction. He used his best efforts to gain the esteem, and promote the pleasures of the little party. This

was an easy work to him. He soon received the distinctions, which are commonly paid to modest superiority; and succeeded in prejudicing more than one of the number strongly in his favor. The week terminated with general regrets; and those who were most interested in Lefevre, begged the honor of his friendship, and entered into proposals for its continuance.

Lefevre had brought himself to call this period 'a week of innocent recreation;' but, with all his speciousness, he could not induce his heart to justify the appellation. It did afford him pleasure; but perhaps, less than to any other of the company. He felt there was too much eating, too much drinking—too much jesting, too much folly; in the absence of all elevated and religious conversation, for his conscience wholly to approve.—'And yet,' said he fretfully, 'why do I not approve? The rest are happy—why should I be miserable?'—In that moment of passion, such is the wickedness of the human heart, he had almost branded religion and his religious connexions as the disturbers of his peace!

Whatever view Lefevre was disposed to take of this occurrence, no event, at this juncture, could have had a more sinister effect on his mind. It had broken in upon his tranquillity—it had destroyed the influence of salutary conviction—and withered those blossomings of hope and pious resolution, which had given his best friends so much satisfaction.

As the noisy stream of pleasure passed away, he became sensible of this, and knew, from former experience, the painful consequence on himself.—He returned, therefore, to his home strengthening his mind against its own reflections, like a disobedient child fortifying its heart against the corrections of a parent, who had often reproved, but always been disregarded. His home received him—but it was not to comfort. His books, his closet, his bible, Douglas, and the Russells,—all, to him, seemed to wear an accusing aspect. His high spirit did not readily endure rebuke, and he fled from their presence, as Adam fled from the voice of the Lord in Paradise.

Once more celestial peace had quitted the bosom of Lefevre, and once more he sought such a substitute as the world, in its amusements and society, could supply. A heathen poet has described the paths of sin as flowery, smooth, and of easy descent. Lefevre found them to be so; every step he took quickened his succeeding one. In 'the perverseness of his way,' he converted his very *preservatives* into a means of accelerating his progress. He stayed out later at night than he otherwise would, to escape the reproofs of Mr. and Mrs. Russell; he sought the society of Wallis and his friends the more, that he might be less in that of Douglas; and, to cover himself in the neglect of the excellent writings which filled his shelves, he the more eagerly gave his fragments of time to the novel and romance.

It is, however, always unpleasing, and sometimes unnecessary, to detail a course of sinfulness. It may be sufficient in this stage of the history to state, that Lefevre, like every former transgressor, 'waxed worse and worse.' He became dissipated

in his mind—careless to his plans of improvement and benevolence—and low in the tone of his morals. He was gradually reconciled to the things he once condemned; and, from being reconciled, found delight in them. He was a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. He was joined to his idols, and after them he *would* go! The concert, the card-table, the ball-room, the tavern-club, the theatre, the masquerade, all witnessed his attendance—but *all left him unhappy.*

Genuine friendship, in minds truly noble, is, at once, a delicate and vigorous plant. It outlives the greatest injuries, while it is susceptible of the least. Such was the friendship of Douglas. It had been tenderly awake to all the variations in Lefevre's conduct, and had urged him to seize the few favorable occasions afforded of intimating his anxieties. He well knew, that direct opposition in *his* mind, would only defeat his object. He had also found, that on some subjects he could succeed better with Lefevre by letter, than by verbal intercourse; and, as he

was about to leave town for some months, he thought he would wait the advantage of a written communication.

Douglas acted up to this intention, and wrote his friend from Plymouth, in the most earnest and affectionate terms. He referred to his declensions and practices, in a firm but delicate manner. He took occasion to notice particularly *one serious* and *glaring impropriety*, into which, he had every reason to think, Lefevre had fallen; and on account of which, the letter itself is omitted in this statement. He then closed by referring the freedom he had taken to their habits of friendship, and tenderly expostulated with him on the error of his ways.

Lefevre was greatly disturbed by the perusal of this letter. His attention passed over every other sentence, and fixed on the *particular charge*, to which an allusion has been made. He sprang from his seat—took a few quick steps across the room—stood motionless—raised his hand to his forehead, and as hastily withdrew it—stepped forward again—and continued

moving over the room in hurried and occasional steps for some time, evidently unconscious of his movements, and in deep silence. He then seized his hat, and hastened to a coffee-house he was accustomed to use. He took up the papers—but could not read them; he mingled with his gay companions—but his heart was too much distressed to be frivolous. He went to the office, and did the duties of the day in silence; and, in the evening, sat down and wrote the following reply to Douglas:—

*London,*
*December*——

'My dear Friend,

'I pass over every thing in your letter, to notice the severe *charge* you bring against me. How could you bring such a charge against me! What a base, unworthy being must I have been in your eyes, before you could have thought such a thing of me! And, if you did think me guilty, why did you not tell me at once?

How could you let days and weeks pass away, without accusing me, while you believed me to be living in so abominable a practice? Is this *friendship?* Should I have acted so towards *you?*

'Must I, in regular terms, deny this detested charge? I do deny it, and in the most solemn manner. I call heaven and earth to witness, that I am as innocent of the crime you allege to me, as the new born infant. I have faults, but, thank God, that is not one. But you have thought me *capable* of such an act! How must you be changed towards your friend! I know my late conduct has not pleased you, but I did not expect this from you. If you can entertain such opinions of your friend, he must feel there is an end to friendship.

'Your's aggrieved,

'CHARLES LEFEVRE.'

'P. S. I beg of you to burn this on reading it. Your's is already in flames.'

To this letter, Douglas returned the following answer:—

*Plymouth,*
*December*——

'My very Dear Charles,

'Although I could not avoid thinking the *spirit* in which you wrote the letter I now acknowledge was reprehensible, I assure you its general contents gave me the *highest satisfaction.* I had, indeed, for "days and weeks" been under the impression which I have explained, and it is not easy for you to imagine the distress it has given me. I did not—I could not take up such an opinion on *slight grounds.* I was slow—very slow to believe; and I had, and still have, every *reason* to think it true. However, as there was the *mere possibility* of my being deceived, I determined to put it to you, and be guided by your reply.

'By that reply, I am governed. Your solemn denial is *quite sufficient.* I have never had reason to question your truth and frankness, and I could rely upon them entirely in a much weightier case than this. Let the subject then sink into oblivion, and be to us both, as though it never had been. I promise you it shall be thus with me,

One word, however, in dismissing it for ever. I am concerned for that *high spirit* you discover on the intimation, (for it was not a *charge*), made, as you must believe, in the purest friendship. To think that we are altogether *incapable* of a bad action, is "to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think;" and, so far from promoting our safety, often forebodes our fall. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!" The very moment we think we can stand *alone*, we are in danger!

'But, if I have to crave your pardon for indulging a thought unworthy of you, in this instance, have I been mistaken as to the *other particulars* in my letter. Are not my fears, that you have relinquished your private devotions, that you are sacrificing the pleasures of literature, benevolence, and religion, to those worldly associates and engagements, which you have already found so very perilous to you, too well founded? I know your conscience sides against you on this question, and I am grieved for it. And, forgive me if I add, that I fear you are resisting the very

convictions, which you ought to cherish as salutary and merciful. O, my dear Charles, do not sustain a conflict so unnatural and criminal! To, gain a victory over our own conscience,' is, to throw up an almost invincible obstacle to our salvation!

'You appear to me inclined to make a full experiment on worldly happiness. Already you have gone dangerous lengths to satisfy your curiosity. And, as far as you have advanced, what is your conclusion? Have you found any thing to be compared with those calm, exalted, and benign enjoyments, which religion and friendship have afforded you in former days? Does your eye fill now with the tear of ecstacy, sympathy, or love, as it was wont to do, when you dwelt on the beauties of nature—held communion with a friend—or rose into adoration of the blessed God? Ah! Charles——

'Excuse me, I mean no personal reflection, when I say, that even those low enjoyments, which your associates may find in the pursuit of the world, will be

*denied* to *you*. They have never risen to intellectual pleasures—they have not had any serious object before them in life—their consciences have not been enlightened, and they are troubled with few convictions of their folly. But, O, Charles, what is *your* case?—Can *you*, who have fed with angels, herd with swine?—Can your aspiring spirit grovel in sensualities?—Will it not be "hard for *thee* to kick against the pricks?"—Rely upon it, in spite of you, at every step you take, conscience will embitter your pleasures, and aggravate your sorrows.

'O, Charles! my heart is troubled for you. Whither will your course lead you?—I see snares, and pitfalls, and ravenous beasts in your way. Already your feet are entangled. O, escape for thy life! You admire magnanimity—Be magnanimous! Burst the bonds of deadly pleasure—Be deaf to the voice of flattery—Renounce the world as the enemy of your soul—Call upon God whilst he is near!

'I had much delight this morning in visiting a good man, who has been bed-

ridden these *twenty-five years.* I was prepared to pity him, but he called on me to rejoice. "Are you not wearied out with the length of your affliction?" "Wearied, Sir," said he,—"No. Nature would soon faint, but God sustains me. I could lie here another twenty-five years, if it pleased God. I have found this bed to be the very gate of heaven!—Length of my affliction, Sir! O, let me not call it long—it is short, very short, and will soon be over. These light afflictions, which are but for a *moment,* work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "This is a happy state of mind," said I. "Thank God for it!" said he, as in an act of devotion. Then addressing me—"Why, yes; and *every thing* God does is to make us happy. Is he not all love?—he cannot then be unkind. Is he not all-wise?—he cannot then do wrong. Are not His promises yea and amen in Christ Jesus?—he cannot then break his word. None who have trusted him have repented of it. My day of affliction has been twenty-five years long; but I have found, *as my day so my*

*strength has been.* Blessed be his holy name!—O, Sir, I dare not complain. My affliction is a *mercy.* It came upon me when I was a young man—when I was worldly, thoughtless, and foolish; and, I dread to think what I might have been, but for this affliction. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."—We sang and prayed together, and parted in pleasing hope of meeting in a better state.

'What an instance of the power of religion!—What could the world have done for such a person?—May it be our support, and comfort, and exceeding great reward!

'Your's, my dear friend,

'Most affectionately,

'JAMES DOUGLAS.'

Lefevre was evidently uneasy till he received the reply from Douglas. And, as the first letter had given him an unac-

countable degree of anxiety, so this seemed to yield undue satisfaction. If these powerful emotions are to find an explanation, it must be in some future event of the history. In the midst of his satisfaction, however, he was little affected by the more important parts of the letter. He blamed himself for the severe manner in which he had written, and admired the moderated temper of Douglas; and, perhaps, he did this, the more readily, that, in the exercise, those impressions which were of a religious character, might evaporate. Such is the subtlety of the human heart!

Notwithstanding the tender and unexceptionable behaviour of Douglas, Lefevre's conduct towards him was sensibly changing. He became more shy and reserved; and encreasingly avoided his society. He seemed to have lost his former confidence and dignity towards him; and was careful merely to avoid giving him offence.

Douglas, however, was determined on his course. He would not pay indifference with indifference; but would maintain his hold on his friend to the last. He thought

he could easily account for Lefevre's deportment. He was aware that Wallis was endeavouring to create prejudices in his mind; and, he knew, that his admonitions could not be grateful to him, and that his very presence must remind him of the height from which he had fallen, of the joys he had cast away for ever. But he was persuaded that Lefevre still respected and loved him; and he was resolved his respect and love should be made to contribute, as far as possible, to his deliverance. The hand of Providence was once more about to extend itself to co-operate with Douglas, in executing his benevolent purpose.

## CHAPTER XVI.

IN the ensuing spring, Douglas was called to suffer great domestic trials. His grief soon found its way to the sympathetic heart of Lefevre; and he hastened to his side, to verify, by the kindest attentions, the unabated strength of his friendship. He was not now, indeed, sufficiently at ease with himself, to pay those little offices on common occasions, which once made him the most obliging of persons; but *extraordinary* events could yet call forth the great and good qualities of his mind.

Douglas received the sympathies of Lefevre, as they were a pledge of love, with answering kindness; and, as they were a likely means of benefiting him who offered them, with hopeful joy. His overtures of assistance were embraced, as they would necessarily multiply their interviews; and as it became needful for Douglas to take a short journey on an

afflictive errand, he pressed his friend to accompany him. It was not easy for Lefevre to deny a friend in adversity any thing; and, at considerable inconvenience, he put himself in a condition to meet his request. The engagement terminated seriously.

They left home in a gig. As they were entering one of the narrow streets leading to Cheapside, the horse, a spirited creature, took fright, at the smacking of a carman's whip immediately over his head. Douglas, who was driving, did his utmost to restrain the animal, but in vain; he went at full gallop. They soon perceived two flour-waggons coming down the very centre of the street. It was impossible for them to clear the way in time—death was before them! Lefevre, in the alarm, seized the reins, and, as though only thinking of the safety of his friend, exclaimed, 'Douglas, get out behind!'—'No,' said Douglas, 'we'll live or die together—leave the reins!'—still doing his best, though the case was hopeless. They did clear the fore-wheel of the first

waggon, but struck against the hind one with such violence as snapped the axle-tree in two. They were both thrown, by the jerk, into the air; while the maddened horse continued running, with the remnants of the gig at his heels.

Lefevre fell by the wheel, and only received a slight injury on the arm. Douglas was cast at greater distance, beneath the feet of the horses in the second team. The driver was so stupified by the occurrence that he did not think to stop them. His fall had made Douglas insensible. Two of the horses stepped over him, doing him no harm, except grazing his cheek with their shoes! He came to his senses for a moment, and saw a twelve-inch wheel just upon him! He sprang on his feet, exclaiming, 'My God!' and the next moment fell into the arms of some persons who had come to his help, and again fainted away.

Lefevre forgot his own hurt in the greater injuries of Douglas. He sent for a coach, and a surgeon at the same time. He drove to his lodgings; and, that he

might soften the matter to Mrs. Russell, he alighted first at some little distance, and entered before the coach became visible. All this he did with such ease and spirit, that no one would have thought him a personal sufferer; and yet his neglected wound had not ceased to emit the life-blood from his frame.

Douglas still continued in a fainting state. His medical assistance was, however, efficacious; and, although exhausted by the loss of blood, he became, in the evening sensible and composed. On first looking round him, he saw Lefevre at his side. 'O, Charles!' said he, 'how near have we been to eternity! This is the 25th of May; let us never forget this day!' 'Blessed be God that it is no worse!' cried Mrs. Russell, rejoiced to hear Douglas speak again. 'Ah!' said Douglas, 'I deserve much worse! Like Jonah, I was repining at my afflictions.' Mr. Russell came into the room. 'Ah! my dear James!'—taking his hand—'Well! God moves in a mysterious way—Judgment and mercy—but let us acknowledge them on

our knees.' They knelt around the bed; and the venerable man offered up suitable thanksgivings and prayer to the Great Preserver, while the tear of affection and piety moistened his cheeks.

During the sufferings of Douglas, Lefevre was most obliging and kind in his behaviour. Excepting that they had not that full and unincumbered communion, Douglas was reminded of what he was in a *former* affliction, a period sacred to them, as the confirmation of their friendship. There was, indeed, an air of self-denial rather than of complacency in his attentions; and, if he read, his choice would fall on books of a different character to those which once ranked first in his estimation. Douglas, however, hoped the mere intercourse would have beneficial consequences; and he more than acquiesced in a confinement which continued it.

But, how hardly shall they, who have been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well! If good habits are a preservative from what is wrong, bad ones are a more powerful obstacle to what is good. Lefe-

vre's habits, by this time, were converted against himself. His better thoughts, as if encouraged by the presence of Douglas, endeavoured to assert their rights; but they had been too often conquered to make another conquest difficult. As his friend recovered to his employments, he withdrew from him, and sought again wholly to lose himself in the world. The voice of conscience once more subdued, his inclinations, like a river for a while obstructed in its course, flowed but the more violently in their usual channel.

The remains of this year bear no favorable testimony to the career of Lefevre. It shall only be noticed as far as it may beneficially shew the deceitful and progressive influence of iniquity.

All his former worldly compliances were persevered in, and opened the way to others of a less questionable character. His hours were not only unseasonable, but he was frequently from home the whole night. His countenance, from being lively and cheerful, was marked with disquietude; and his temper, from being ardent,

became irritable and stormy. From having paid little attention to politics, he became fond of them; and was violent in his opinions. He seemed willing to look on religion with a hopeless eye, and scarcely regarded the forms it imposed. The claims of the sabbath were neglected. If he attended a public service, it was with an averted heart; and the commencement of the day was generally wasted in slumber, while the close was dissipated in ungodly society.

Although this was the chosen course of Lefevre, and he had already overcome many difficulties in pursuing it, he was far from being satisfied with it, or with himself. He found that 'the way of transgressors is hard;' and that it is especially so to those, who have been blessed with a religious education, and an enlightened conscience. Wisdom would have disposed him to quit a course so troublesome to him, and to return to those 'paths of peace' which he had forsaken; but from wisdom he was at this time sadly estranged: Under the delusive power of sin, he chose

rather to attempt what was really an impossibility—to reconcile conscience to rebellion, and gather enjoyment from wickedness!

Resolved on a forbidden path, what wonder if Lefevre was prepared to listen to fresh temptation. To a mind willing to be tempted, temptations are never wanting. Some of the most dangerous character presented themselves to Lefevre. Two or three of them should be observed.

He was induced to think degradingly of mankind. From having thought too favourably of men, he was now disposed to do them injustice. Wallis and his companions had insisted, that every thing above the common level was *pretension*—that all show of excellence was to be referred to a common corruption of motive—that, if all hearts could be exposed, they would be found alike, irrespective of any change from religious influence. Generous as he was, Lefevre endeavoured to receive these base and ungenerous sentiments. It was for his *interest* to do so. For, if all men were alike, then *he need not be uneasy*; or,

if the only difference consisted in pretension, then his very irregularities made him superior to many, as they would prove him the more *honest* man. He became severe on the conduct of the professors of religion; and lynx-eyed in detecting the faults of its ministers. Unhappily, too many instances of defection from religion occurred within the circle of his knowledge; and he *abused* them, to support his own departure, and sanction Wallis's theory of universal selfishness!

In addition to this, he was tempted to entertain sceptical notions of the christian dispensation. Infidelity has its root rather in the heart than the head. Lefevre had no doubts on the authenticity of religion till he *wished* to have them. The *truths* exhibited in revelation were become unpleasant to him. That the gospel he neglected rested on divine authority—that there is a God who will judge all men—that there is a state of future punishment—were opinions, which he could not readily accommodate, in a heart circumstanced as his. Awful to tell! *he wished to disbelieve*

*them.* He allowed himself to read books of an infidel tendency. He indulged the petulant objections to the christian scheme, and slighted the weight of evidence on which it stood. He even submitted to hear the ribaldry and ridicule of the profane and thoughtless, and strove to call it argument. But all his efforts were as vain as they were shocking. His understanding gave the lie to his heart. The force of evidence was so overpowering that he *could not* release himself from the authority of truth. He remained a believer in opposition to his desires—in opposition to his efforts. The most that he could, at any time do, was, to *doubt*, not to *disbelieve*—to be a *sceptic*, not an *infidel.*

But this was not enough. Lefevre had done his utmost to neutralize a faith, he could not reject; and to reconcile his mind to his conduct, by supposing all men as bad as himself. But, after all, in his thoughtful moments, he was compelled to allow, that there was a reality in religion; and that many of its professors were something more than hypocrites. He was still

uneasy. He had long been endeavouring by undue *excitement* to subdue this feeling, and hide himself from himself. For this he had fled, to the novel—to the card-table—to the theatre—to scenes of obstreperous mirth and folly. To his chagrin however, their power to engross the thoughts, and excite the imagination declined. The novel, deprived of its *novelty*, became insipid; and pleasures, always courted, lost their power to please! What was he to do? A *fresh* and more *powerful excitement* was necessary. Where was he to find it? Wine and strong drink offered themselves. Their offer was accepted! He had occasionally found their efficacy in enabling him to brave his fears, or forget himself; and he was, now, tempted to an habitual use of them:—not because he relished their flavour, or would readily submit himself to their most debasing effects, but because the disquietudes of an aggrieved conscience were insupportable to him!

Such was the progress of Lefevre! While it is lamented, let it not be thought

peculiar and surprising. It is the *natural* progress of sin. If there is any thing surprising in the course of a sinner it is, that he should ever take the *first* step into the paths of temptation—all the following steps admit, alas! of too easy an explanation. No temptation is *final*. Each one leads to another in an unbroken series; and the last "lays hold on hell!" Let no one say then, "Thus far will I go on forbidden ground, and no farther." It is the language of presumption and ignorance. Lefevre thought this, if he dared not utter it. And, if any one might have thought it, he might—for he was temperate, intelligent, and virtuous. But how is he ensnared! Every step he takes seems to give the colour of impossibility to his return. Sin indeed is like the "letting out of water, better not meddled with,"—it appears, at first, like the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, and excites no alarm; but it imperceptibly widens and lengthens, till it spreads all around us the gloom of hopeless sorrow!

## CHAPTER XVII.

While Lefevre was hoping for temporary peace by violent efforts to suppress the voice of conscience, he was subjected to new alarm from a voice, that was neither to be cajoled nor resisted—it was the voice of *creditors*. He had failed to learn the right use of money by his past embarrassments. He had flattered himself about the patience of those to whom he was indebted, and his capacity, in the end, to satisfy them, till his difficulties forced themselves upon him, and appeared in a menacing and insurmountable aspect.

He had already, in addition to the sum Wallis lent him, borrowed £100 of an acquaintance on interest. This, for a time, set him free from his entanglements, and enabled him to redeem the pledge he had given to his brother's creditors; but, as his plan of expenditure was not improved, he was only removing the evil to

a more distant day. Now the crisis returned upon him; and became the more threatening, from the very postponement. It was the turn of the year, and the demands upon him were general and unanswerable, and were sometimes connected with most sharp reflections.

Lefevre, whose high spirit could ill brook importunity, and who was vexed by reproach in proportion as he was conscious of meriting it, in his first anger was ready to declare, that he would punish impudence with non-payment. A sense of justice, however, soon recovered him from the extravagance of passion; and he felt that the strong arm of the law was not to be trifled with.

In this emergency he saw but one resource—in this he sought comfort. 'I will write,' said he, 'to my friend Deacon, and borrow another £50 of him—that will free me from these miserable cormorants.' He did write, and received an immediate reply. He burst the letter in search of the money; but no money was there! Mr. Deacon had, perhaps, doubts

of his prudence, and he merely wrote, that he was willing to make the advance, provided he gave not only the interest on the whole, but *security likewise.*

This note provoked Lefevre exceedingly. With a consciousness of his own integrity, he had little respect for the forms of business; and he pronounced such a condition, a personal insult. He tore the offending note into a hundred pieces, and angrily declared, he would have nothing to do with its author. Much of his anger, however, was diverted when he had reflected on his situation, and he smiled bitterly to think, that such were his necessities, he must either forego resentment to one man's conduct, or bear the insolence of many. His mind was chafed and irritated excessively; and he closed the day irresolute what to do, and dreading the consequences of doing nothing.

It happened that on the night of this day Douglas took a bed, as he occasionally did, with Mr. Russell. He slept on the same floor with Lefevre; and the door common to the two rooms was, as was

usual when he was a guest, thrown open. Lefevre and he, by this accommodation, had often talked each other to sleep; but little use was made of it at this time. Lefevre was dejected and silent; this, however, had latterly become so common to him in the presence of his religious friends, that Douglas scarcely observed it.

In the night he was awakened by Lefevre's muttering in his sleep; but sought to compose himself again, as he knew he was in some degree accustomed to it. Lefevre, however, prevented his intention. He presently rose up in his bed, and, with great agitation, exclaimed at intervals—'Pay!—yes, I'll pay you!—I tell you I will pay you——have patience—O don't persecute me!—I can't pay yet—wait a bit—' He sprang from his bed and walked, still asleep, across the rooms, with a scornful air. He was silent two or three minutes, and then continued,—'Pay you! For insult, hey?—Feel what I have felt, that's the best pay for you—No *principle!*—say that again'—and he clenched the bed post of Douglas's

bedstead—'Arrest me!—Do then—do—do——' He paused—turned to the washing-stand—bathed his hand and forehead in water—and, as though sensibly benefitted, said—'There—there,—be cool—be cool,'—and then retired to his bed.

This scene filled Douglas with surprise and pity. He had entertained fears that Lefevre was living beyond his income, and this confirmed them. He lay a quiet spectator of it, only purposing to awaken him in case he should offer to leave the rooms, or do any thing injurious to himself; and determined to stay breakfast with him in the morning, that he might have an opportunity of noticing it.'

Accordingly, as they were taking coffee together, Douglas took occasion from the silence and evident depression of his friend, to ask, what was the matter with him.

'Matter!—Nothing!—Why?'

'I'm sure *something* oppresses your mind. Your looks ——'

'*Looks!*' said Lefevre, carrying his hand over his face and striving to relax the

muscles,—'we are not always accountable for our *looks*.'

Douglas sighed to think how Lefevre shunned the confidence once so dear to him; but, without making his concern visible, replied—'Certainly not—nor is it merely by your looks, that I judge—you were very much disturbed in the night.'

'Disturbed! how? what?'

Douglas briefly explained to him what he had witnessed. Unwilling as he was to believe the occurrence, he felt it was probable; and casting off the air of reserve, he had assumed, with his natural frankness confessed his situation, and even entered into all its particulars.

He paused. Douglas remained silent. He was afraid if he spoke at that moment, he should speak reproachfully. Astonishment and concern, however, sat on his countenance.

'I see you are concerned,' continued Lefevre. "'I thank you! O, you know not what I have suffered! Let him that sleeps too much borrow a debtor's pillow. These insolent fellows! I hate to be

dunned and tormented by them!—My mother too, (suppressing his emotions) I wrote to her—*she* refused me—It shall be long enough before I write again.'

'My dear Charles, be reasonable. I must not hear a word against your mother. A child should strongly suspect that conduct, which leads him to think unfavorably of an excellent parent. If she has been wrong, it has been on the side of indulgence.—As to your creditors—a debtor is perhaps the worst person to judge of their conduct. Their case, calmly considered, is often a hard one. Every transaction between a tradesman and a customer, has the nature of a *covenant*. The one party agrees to furnish a certain article at a certain time; and the other party engages to pay a certain price at a certain time. It is no strange thing then, should the purchaser violate the covenant, if he be subjected to importunity, and even to crimination. When a man becomes a debtor to another, he gives him a *superiority*. Rely upon it, if we would have the respect of others, we must respect ourselves. And, I know you will excuse

me, if I say, that whoever is to blame, the *greatest* blame rests upon yourself.'

'Blame! Ah! I have been a fool to entangle myself so, I allow—But no one is injured except myself. I would sooner starve than any one should be able to say, he has lost a shilling by me.'

'I believe it most firmly, Charles. Your intentions are good—your integrity is undoubted. Yet, let me ask, what is integrity, what are firm and fine principles, when unprotected by the humbler virtues of prudence and economy? Have we not seen what they are? Have we not observed many characters, of high excellence originally, become, for the want of that foresight and calculation they effected to despise, the slaves of circumstance, and the prey of temptation!'

'Douglas, you reproach me!' said Lefevre, closely touched by this appeal.

'No, my dear Charles, I do not *reproach* you—I warn you—Forgive me, I *must* warn you. Can I see you——'

'Well, but I don't see how I could avoid it,' interrupted Lefevre, 'I had to

pay, you know, more than £50. on my brother's account—and I glory in having done it!'

'What you did to separate reproach from the name of a deceased brother, was to be expected from your generous nature. Yet, I don't know that I can fully justify it.'

'Not justify it!'——

'Hear me, my dear friend. Had you been master of your purse, I should have thought the action proper and noble; but, as the case was, you had, I think, deprived yourself of the power of doing so noble an act; your purse was the *property of others.* Nor, excuse me, can I even think the act *done* in favor of the departed relative, since the money was borrowed, without the sensible and near prospect of repaying it.'

'Without a prospect! Can you think I would have borrowed money without the prospect of paying it?'

'I do not think you would borrow a guinea without the prospect, and *full intention* to return it. But really I must say, my dear Charles, that, as you have

proceeded, there is to me no *apparent* prospect of——'

'O you are mistaken. Am I not looking forward to an advance in the office. You know how I stand in the favour of some of the superiors—and, without favour, it cannot be long before I get a rise.'

'Is it possible, Charles, that with your independent mind, you can submit to live on *contingencies!* Is not such a life the parent of improvidence, extravagance and idleness? Have we not seen many miserable expectants presume on uncertain hopes, till the necessity of their circumstances has extinguished natural affection, and induced them secretly to rejoice in the removal of a relative or friend, when they would otherwise have deeply mourned the event! O, Charles, whatever you become, be not the dupe of *doubtful expectation!* Would you ever have been in your present situation, but for these wretched hopes?'

'Certainly not. I abhor it—and once I get out of it, I'll take care for the future. But these "wretched hopes" as you call

them, are now all my hopes. If I give them up, my situation is *hopeless.*'

'O no. It is only hopeless, if you continue to build on these chimerical expectations. Never despair of what prudence and integrity can do for you. Speculate not on the wheel of fortune, but look to yourself. Resolve,—to *live within your present income*; and, that you may be sure of doing this, *purchase nothing but as you have the money to pay for it,*—and all will be well.'

'Ha! but this I *cannot* do. I cannot, you know, be mean and dishonorable.'

'My dear friend, pray do not deceive yourself by a gross perversion of terms. Who is mean and dishonorable—the man who wears a patched coat, keeps a plain table, and denies himself the luxuries of life, that he may live within his means and preserve his independence? or, the man who, by outrunning his income, sells his liberty, revels on the property of others, and subjects himself to creditors? How often have we admired the poor knight, who, to avoid the snares of bribery and

dependence, was found making a *second* dinner from a cold shoulder of mutton, above the most affluent courtier, who had sold himself to others for a splendid pension! For my part, I esteem the humble peasant, who struggles to live within his 14*s.* a week; while I cannot but despise the wanton profligate, who cannot limit himself to his £20,000 a year.'

'But, indeed, mean or not mean, my income is too small for my situation,' said Lefevre.

'I would not make that assertion, if my income were only half what your's is, Charles. Depend upon it, if we have not firmness enough to resolve to live within our *present* income, we are *never* likely to do it. But we should not content ourselves with general assertions in matters of economy. Let us *calculate.* Prove to me, in pounds, shillings, and pence, that you cannot live within your income, and then I will be satisfied.'

Lefevre took up his pen to make the estimation. Douglas was pleased to bring him to this, but observed that he was doing

it in round numbers of ten, twenty, and thirty pounds.

'Stay, stay, my dear Charles,' said he, smiling; 'too fast a great deal. Calculation without exactness, is worse than nothing. The agreement was, that you should prove in pounds, *shillings,* and *pence.* Let us, at least, keep to two thirds of it, and make out the account in pounds and *shillings.*'

He took the pen; and, passing from article to article, they agreed on the separate sums for each head. The evidence was against Lefevre. After a full allowance to the different *items,* it appeared that he might have, at the end of each year, a spare sum in his hand, of from ten to fifteen pounds.

Lefevre had some pleasure in coming to this practical estimate, as it encouraged hope, that he might yet disengage himself from the net in which he was entangled; but he was much more pained in witnessing such proofs of his folly and imprudence, in the presence of one whose

opinion, after all, was of more real value to him than that of any other person.

Douglas felt this, and speedily called off his attention. 'There, my dear friend,' said he, 'I thought I should convince you that your situation is not "hopeless;" that you really may live within your income. I take it for granted that you *will*. It only wants resolution and perseverance. As you now stand, I think it may be well to obtain the fifty pounds from Deacon. I should then, if in your case, resolve—to borrow no more money—to live on the scale we have made—and to apply at least ten pounds a year to reduce the sums you have borrowed.—You hesitate!'

'I only hesitate about applying to Deacon. I don't like to be indebted to him after his note.'

'But you are indebted to him already; and, as you must borrow once more, I think you had better use him. However, leave it to me. If you will allow me, I will get the money, and send it forward, and engage myself to him for the whole.'

'Ah! Douglas——'

'I know your thoughts, Charles. But there is no obligation—none between friends. Here there is not the shadow of it. Deacon, I dare say, knows enough of me to be satisfied with my word; and I know you will not suffer him to give me any other trouble.'

The generous tear arose to Lefevre's eye. 'Indeed I will not—you shall never be inconvenienced by me.—Indeed ——'

'No assurances—no promises, my dear Charles, from you. I rely on your justice,—your generosity.'

So saying, Douglas took his leave; called on Mr. Deacon, and made the arrangement with him; and forwarded the expected sum to Lefevre in a kind note, designed to strengthen his mind against the discouragements of his circumstances. He was not fond of *suretyships*; but, in favour of his friend, he determined to risk as much as he engaged for; and he did cherish a hope, that it might induce Lefevre to bring himself to live within his salary. More than this, at this time he

did not attempt, as he was aware that such a change would necessarily carry the most important consequences with it.

There was, indeed, some room for Douglas's hopes. Nothing could have affected Lefevre more beneficially than his conduct; and, had it occurred at an earlier period, there could have been little doubt of its immediate success. His good sense convinced his judgment—his generosity touched his heart—and his declining to make, as Lefevre feared, a *religious use* of his friendly assistance, seemed to revive his religious sensibilities. He thought of the days that were passed, and compared them with the present. Shame and hope, remorse and gratitude, sensual passion and romantic generosity, contended within him. He pronounced Douglas 'the most excellent and noble of friends;' but while he felt his respect, his confidence, and his gratitude increase towards him, he confessed himself unworthy of his friendship, rather, perhaps, to reconcile himself to his worldly course, than from any sentiment of humility.

Lefevre had resolved on living within his salary; and, being sincere in his intentions, he looked to their accomplishment. He was surprised, however, on consideration, to perceive, how much this simple resolution would cost him. In Douglas's scale of expence, there was no allowance for receiving company—nor for tavern suppers—nor for liquors—nor for worldly divertisements—nor, indeed, for superfluities of any kind. To fulfil his resolution, then, he must break with his associates—he must resist appetites that had become almost irresistible by indulgence—he must return to his former mode of life, and become once more the quiet guest, at the quiet table of Mr. and Mrs. Russell!

The sacrifice was too formidable for a mind so sadly enfeebled and enslaved by bad habits as Lefevre's; and yet he dared not, in so many words, decline it. 'Douglas is quite right,' thought he; 'retrenchment is necessary, and retrench I *will*—But I cannot do *impossibilities*.—There will be *extras* that are unavoidable. However, what I can

do, I *will.* And at all events, I'll take care *he shall never suffer by me.'* Thus did he again delude himself by *generalities,* and almost nullify the influence of Douglas's friendship.

A few weeks after this time, a life dropped in the office, and Lefevre obtained the rise on which he had so much depended. As it was injurious to him in anticipation, so it was far from beneficial in possession. While the encrease was not sufficient to meet all his accustomed gratifications, it was enough to bribe his watchfulness over his expences; and, consequently, foreboded a renewal of his difficulties. However, it should be stated, that this advance, together with Douglas's remonstrance, did enable Lefevre, this quarter, to reduce, in a small degree, his pecuniary obligations to the Russells.

## CHAPTER XVIII.



Mr. and Mrs. Russell demand more notice in this part of the story, than merely to be referred to at the end of a chapter. Their affection to Lefevre was little less than parental; and they had lately watched the changes in his conduct and character with anxiety and alarm. His irregular hours—his irritation of temper—his tart replies—and his general reserve—gave them great pain; but their pious minds knew a deeper grief, when dwelling, as they often dwelt, on his departure from religion, and compliance with temptation, to an extent to them undefinable, because to them unknown. In fact, he who was once the joy of their fireside, had rendered himself the theme of unceasing regret and lamentation.

Although it was a light thing to Lefevre to become a thorn in that nest he

had once made so downy, Mr. Russell and his consort were uniformly eager for his recovery. They made his situation the subject of particular and daily prayer; they sought every opportunity to persuade him from the paths of sin; and, by a number of kind offices, they did sometimes make him hesitate in his course. On the other hand, Lefevre laboured to shun intercourse with them; and when forced upon it, sometimes by an affected laugh, and sometimes by a dogged answer, he would turn the conversation, from religious and personal, to common topics.

One evening, at this period of the narrative, they had been particularly dwelling with tears on the state of 'their dear Charles.' As, for some time, they had not found occasion to express their growing fears for him, they determined, should he return home that night, they would endeavour to get some conversation with him. It happened, that Lefevre returned sooner than usual. They received him with welcoming smiles.

'Come, Charles,' said Mr. Russell,

shifting his pipe to his left hand, and with his right, pulling round a chair towards the fire, 'let us have a little chat.'

'It is late sir,' replied Lefevre, taking up his chamber candle to light it.

'Late!' said Mr. Russell, taking out his watch—'no; it's early for you. It is only ten o'clock.'

'I have a letter to write, sir.'

'Ah! Charles,' said Mrs. Russell, 'you have always something to do, to keep you from us. We want to talk to you of what most concerns you.'

'It will be best, perhaps, to leave what most *concerns me*, entirely *to me*, ma'am,' drawing towards the door.

'Oh! Charles,' continued she, 'I fear —I fear'——

'Fear nothing for me, ma'am. I will try to take care of *myself*. It is best for each one to attend his *own* business. Good night sir—good night ma'am'—said he, leaving the room.

'Well—good night Charles'—answered Mr. Russell, in a plaintive tone.

Mrs. Russell could make no answer.

She burst into tears, and sobbed for some time.

Mr. Russell drew his chair to hers. He took her hand, and affectionately kissing it, placed it on his knee—'Comfort, comfort, my dearest life,' said he. 'Charles cannot be quite *himself* to night.'

'O—he is to be pitied—greatly pitied! But it is hard to bear—very hard——'

'You shall not bear it, my love! I will not allow him——'

'O, don't say it! I must endeavor to submit to it. Who can tell where he would go—what he might do, if he were to leave us in his present state of mind. I cannot think of it! While he is here, there is *some* hope. If he choose to go, we cannot prevent it; but he must not go at our motion. No—He shall have a home here as long as he is *willing*, let it cost me what it may!'

'But I cannot see you made so unhappy,' said Mr. Russell, with strong concern, while he admired her disinterestedness.

'Well, my dear, I will try to bear it better,' replied Mrs. Russell, smiling

through her tears, and gathering up her spirits. 'It is hard to bear from one one loves; but the promise is "*As* thy day *so* thy strength shall be." Suppose we pray that this promise may be fulfilled to us in this trial; or rather, that the trial may be removed, and our dear Charles once more be made a comfort to us.'

Mr. Russell was always ready to pray. They knelt down together, and by prayer and thanksgiving made known their desires to their heavenly Father. They arose from their knees, with serene countenances. Every anxiety was dissipated—every care was lightened—every tear was wiped away, as by the hand of divine love. They sealed their communion with God and each other by a kiss, and, retiring to their chamber, sunk into peaceful slumbers.

It was otherwise with Lefevre. He really loved the Russells, and was convinced he ought to behave differently towards them, although, as his religious monitors, they were such enemies to the false peace he was endeavouring to establish, that he frequently, as now, resisted,

with petulance, an invitation to intercourse. This made him at once dissatisfied with them, and with himself. To escape their observing eye, and the expression of their pious anxieties, which he had made so unwelcome, he had lately felt much disposed to seek accommodations elsewhere. The disposition was revived this evening; he lay awake, ruminating on it for some time; and, at length, closed his eyes, with a determination to reduce it to practice.

His measures were soon taken. He sent a note the next day expressive of his resolution, and stating, that he should keep to his engagements in every thing, although he should remove from his apartments in a few days.

The few days amounted to a week. Lefevre then made his appearance—adjusted his little affairs in his own rooms—and then sought Mr. and Mrs. Russell, to take his farewell. They were sitting together, in expectancy of his entrance.

He bowed—'I believe I have done all that is necessary. I will send for the things I have packed. The books I leave

with you, till I can settle accounts between us.'

'You shall leave nothing, Charles,' said Mrs. Russell, 'we want no *security* from *you*. Your word is enough.—But must you leave us?—And are we not even to know where you are going?'

'Certainly you are, ma'am. I am going to a friend's for a few days. I think of living at Lambeth.—When I get accommodated, I will let you know.'

She sighed.—'At Lambeth! O, that's far indeed from Mr. Douglas and us.'

'Distance is nothing between friends, ma'am,' said Lefevre.

'Charles,' said Mr. Russell, looking seriously, and laying his hand on his shoulder, 'this is a moment in which we should be candid to each other. Let me ask you, has any thing occurred on our part to give you offence, and make this step necessary?'

'On *your part!*—O, no, sir!—On the contrary, I owe you a thousand thanks for all your acts of kindness to me, and I beg you will accept of them.'

'So far I am satisfied. But, then, I must conclude, my dear Charles, that you leave us because the restraints of a regular and religious family, are become troublesome to you.'

Lefevre was agitated—'I—I have thoughts of selling in the coal trade, by commission. This will make it necessary for me to live near the water side. You know my income is scanty, and I wish to enlarge it.'

'So far, so good. But, Charles, you are now leaving my roof, and I must tell you all my heart. I do fear then, that this is not your *chief* reason.—And, if I am to think you object to a family that is sober and pious, what am I to suppose will be your next choice?—Ah! well I remember, when something younger than you, I became weary of the pious and parental restraints of my father's house, and foolishly rejoiced when I had managed to throw them off. I then thought I should live as I liked, and a fine life it was!—without God, and without hope, in the world!—But blessed be the God of my

fathers, his mercy overtook me, when I was fleeing from it!—I beseech you, then, Charles, as a father his own son, be careful with whom you live—with whom you associate. I have observed that nothing injures you like bad companions—you are led away by them. Avoid them as you would a serpent. Remember God has said "*a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*" It is true—I can bear my seal to its truth. I am now old and grey headed, and I have, through life, made this observation—*that those who delight in company lower than themselves, never come to any thing.*—Keep good company—tarry not with the wine—Seek the favor of God- it is life! Those who forsake him cannot be happy—those who seek him shall not be miserable!'

The dignified simplicity and earnestness with which this was spoken, penetrated the heart of Lefevre. He was too busily employed in an inward conflict to make reply.

'O do consider, Charles,' said Mrs. Russell. 'I don't know what I feel at

parting with you. I fear—I have a thousand fears; but there—you don't like me to talk about my fears.'

'I thank you, ma'am, for your concern. I will endeavor to prevent your fears. At least, I will see that no one is hurt but *myself*, and that will be my concern *only*.'

'Your concern *only*, Charles! What! can you be hurt and I not concerned? Can you be unhappy, and I happy? Do I not love you then? Have you not been as my own child to me? O, Charles, you know—you must know——' she stopped. The strength of her feeling interrupting her utterance.

Lefevre was affected. Seizing her hand, and kissing it, he replied—'I know—I *must* know, that you have been to me as a mother. Forgive me if I have not always, as in this instance, spoken to you as a son.'

Forgive you! bless you! Ah! you have still a tender heart under all—I knew you had! You have said many hard things—but I forget them all. I don't know

how it is, but a kind word from you always overcomes me—Is not that like a mother? O, how kind you used to be!—O, that Wallis!—would that—'

'Blame not my friend, ma'am, for my faults. I am answerable for them all myself, I do assure you.'

Lefevre made a motion to leave. 'You *must* go—we *must* part', said Mrs. Russell, taking his hand between both hers, and pressing it with great emotion.—'Well—go! But wherever you go, you will not find any to love you more than we have done!' She gave up his hand and dropt back into her chair.

Mr. Russell *took* the hand she had relinquished. Then raising his head a little and lifting up his right hand, as in the attitude of devotion, he said, 'God Almighty, who has kept me, and led me, all my life long, bless thee my son! May He guide thee in the slippery paths of youth! May He save thee from the snares of pleasure—from the wickedness of the wicked—and from the deceitfulness of thine own heart! May his favor be a crown of

life and glory to thee!'——Then, quitting his hold, and looking on Lefevre with a countenance glowing with affection, and gracefully extending his arms, he continued—'My dear Charles you now leave us—it is your *own act*—be it so! But remember, in passing through this stormy life, if the shelter we can give should ever be desirable to you, these arms will be open night and day to embrace you!'

Lefevre burst into tears. He veiled his face in his handkerchief, and sprang into the coach which was waiting for him. For a time he could not think—he merely gave vent to his feelings; and when he could, it was to accuse himself for leaving such excellent and devoted friends.

It soon occurred to Mrs. Russell, that she owed it to Mrs. Lefevre to make her acquainted with the recent steps of her son. Accordingly she gave her a brief account of his connexions, his religious declensions, and his removing from her dwelling. Her affectionate fears, which had been suppressed before Lefevre, now, found a full expression. And the whole

letter was such as might well excite the deepest concern in the heart of a devoted mother.

Mrs. Lefevre lost no time in conveying her feelings to her son. Crediting the whole of Mrs. Russell's statement, and fearing *much more*, her letter was filled with the overflowings of maternal anxiety, and affection. She admonished—she remonstrated, on his neglect of religion—his improper society—and his careless and extravagant use of money. She besought him by all the pains she had borne for him—by all the hopes she built upon him—by all the love she had pledged to him—by the claims of filial duty, to consider his ways, and fly from the dangers that threatened him.

Lefevre had for some time withheld from his mother that familiar journal of his engagements and affairs, with which he had once entertained her; and he was not in the least prepared for such a letter. He was, however, too much accustomed to his situation, to sympathize in his mother's alarm. He was grieved that she

should be so evidently pained on his account; but was not willing to allow, that there existed any reason for all the fears she indulged.

He, accordingly, replied to her letter in such a way as was most likely to dissipate her uneasiness. He assured her, that her anxieties were quite unwarranted; and that he was persuaded they could only have been excited by 'the officious and exaggerating pen of Mrs. Russell.' That he had left Mr. Russell's to accommodate himself, at a lower rate; and to be in the way of some other means of encreasing his income, as he was determined to recover himself from debt. That he had nothing, as far as he knew, to fear from his companions, and that he still preserved his friendship with Douglas, who had lately behaved most handsomely to him. That as to religion—he wished to say nothing about it—and to have nothing said to him. He thought it was his own concern, and no one's else. He could not profess what he had not, and, perhaps in the end, it might appear, that he had as much or more, than

those, who were always spouting about it. Thus, easily, had he learned to elude the reproaches of his own conscience, and to nullify the beseeching entreaties of his best friends.

But, while Lefevre was making his conduct plausible to others, and in some degree even to himself, he was really proceeding with accelerated steps in the path of ruin. The restraints arising from his connection with Douglas and the Russells appeared to be his only preservative, and now these were cast off, he seemed like a vessel severed from her last anchor—a prey to the merciless influence of the passions. His high spirit, made fiery and ungovernable by excesses, knew no control from those low and selfish considerations, which keep many from the extremes of vice, who yet have no sense of moral virtue. He felt, without allowing it, that the steps he had already taken were daring and desperate; and his mind took the color of his situation. He had passed through several gradations of iniquity, and he was still dissatisfied and unhappy; he, there-

fore, resolved to make an experiment on those that remained.

From having been tempted, Lefevre now became the tempter of others. Many of his companions, whose conduct he had formerly reprobated, were soon deserted as 'poor spiritless fellows;' while a few partaking of his own temper, and bound to him by his false generosity, were ready to countenance his measures. With this knot of iniquity, he associated for nearly two years, corrupting and being corrupted. From having imbibed a taste for mixed liquors, he became partial to them in a pure state; and, from having used them freely in the close of the day, he had recourse to the morning dram. An attendance on the theatre, opened an easy passage to the brothel; he listened to the voice of 'strange women,' and was taken in their snares. He ran, in short, the whole circle of vice; determined, in the first place, to find, if practicable, enjoyment; and, should this be impossible, to drown care and inquietude. Religion and the concerns of religion, were all this

time put as far from his thoughts as possible. He was resolved, since he could not bring his mind to say with the atheist, 'There is no God,' to *forget* that there is any!

The round of carnal pleasure is, however, soon run. The world, with all her pretensions, has but little variety for her votaries; and, wanting variety, her favors pall upon the appetite. Lefevre had now accomplished his purpose—he had left himself no new—no 'unbroached delight.' He had passed from the doubtful to the improper—from the improper to the vicious—from the vicious to the flagrant—and had neither 'found enjoyment nor drowned care.' He had foolishly thought, that the restraint of his inclinations was a hindrance to his happiness; he had now given the reins to his appetites and passions, and found himself more miserable than he could have thought it possible to be! He would not believe, that the increase of misery was in exact proportion to the progress of sin; but the terrible truth was now written on his con-

science. His intemperance had broken his spirits, and inflamed his temper. An unutterable uneasiness fermented in his bosom; and an indescribable gloom rested between him and every object on which he looked. His companions, from like causes, participated in the same effects; and, from having been accomplices in wickedness, they now, not unfrequently, became each others tormentors.

One evening Lefevre returned to his home at an early hour, and but little affected by liquor. He had differed with one of his companions on some trifle of politics, who, being not so well in the possession of his senses, had insulted him; and Lefevre left the place. He found himself in his room *disengaged* and *alone*, and the idea alarmed him. His heart was filled with anguish and resentment at the conduct of his *friend;* he had long despised himself, but he could not brook the contempt of others. His emotion opened a most unwelcome view of his past folly and guilt. He felt, that although he had found nothing in the world, he had noth-

ing to hope from it, as he had already tried *all* it had to offer. His thoughts reverted to days long gone by. The names of his Mother, Douglas, Religion and—God, crossed his recollections! He shut his eyes—started from his seat across the room, as if shunning their presence—he could not endure to think of those injured names! His mind became exceedingly agitated. He condemned himself—cursed his being—flew to a stupifying draught—and threw himself on his bed, to seek a temporary annihilation, which, at that moment, he would willingly have made eternal!

END OF FIRST VOLUME.

H. TEAPE, PRINTER, TOWER-HILL.